

**Towards a Pentecostal Ethic: Appropriating Pentecostal
Hermeneutics for Ethical Reflection in a Bahamian Context**

by

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Abstract

This thesis tackles a very real practical challenge that Pentecostals face almost daily the issue of biblically-informed ethical decision making. When controversial issues arise that have very little or no direct mention in the Bible, how do Pentecostals arrive at an ethically defensible position? The free-form embrace of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal tradition has perhaps contributed to a lack of a tangible approach which might be descriptive and prescriptive of the way ethical issues ought to be processed, the most common Pentecostal idea simply being that the Holy Spirit will provide the necessary guidance in whatever situation life presents, whenever life presents it. While there are undoubtedly many factors that will influence the final decision of Pentecostals with regard to a particular position on a given issue, the parameters of this study will be limited to the role of the Bible in that decision process. The reason for this can be attributed to the apparent Pentecostal distinctive of the Bible being the inspired Word of God.¹ It is noted that pneumatology has been thrust into the forefront of Pentecostalism, as its predominant defining distinctive.² However, I agree with Simon Chan that foundational to Pentecostal Theology must be the tempered return to the Biblical Launchpad. He writes, “Pentecostals are too carried away with their apocalyptic vision. If this vision is not balanced by a nuanced biblical eschatology which maintains the tension between the ‘has come’ and ‘not yet’, a

¹ French Arrington, *Pneuma: The Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies* The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals [Vol 16 Spring 1994] 101-107

² Frank Macchia *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* [Zondervan Grand Rapids, 2006], 21

crisis mentality could set in.”³ The perception by many, about Pentecostals is that they are perhaps too otherworldly; to borrow a cliché ‘so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good’. It becomes important for Pentecostalism that Pentecostals be careful to avoid overemphasizing their reliance on the Holy Spirit at the risk of minimizing Biblical priority, if indeed the Bible is the foundation of their ethical expression. Chan’s statement is important to the area of my research in that it helps to keep the reigns of focus on the priority of the Bible. My research focus in this thesis becomes a natural ‘next step’ to determine how Pentecostals engage the Bible.

³ Simon Chan *Pentecostal Theology and The Christian Spiritual Tradition* [Wipf and Stock Eugene, 2000], 116

Acknowledgements

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Corinthians 2:9,10

I am thankful to God for allowing me the opportunity to look into a portion of the working of the Spirit among mankind through this thesis. May this experience be the catalyst in making full proof of my calling.

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Introduction

Stark divisions were evident among the Bahamian Christian community during the recent national debate on the question of whether or not to legalize gambling in the Bahamas, specifically, the playing of games of chance for money. The differences of opinion among the leading voices of the nation may be representative of different ethical perspectives approaching this complicated issue that has historically been viewed from a negative perspective. The Christian community also appeared to have varying opinions, including silence, as to how to advise their parishioners on this subject matter. However, I think it is important for Christian churches in particular, Pentecostals, to respond rather than avoid complex questions in order to define themselves in part as a moral authority, but also to assist their congregations in having an accepted position on any issue to which they can refer.

In attempting to explore these issues fully, this thesis investigates the question; do Pentecostals in the Bahamas adhere to a particular set of ethics? And can this evolving ethic be described as distinctively Pentecostal?

The thesis develops its uniqueness from investigating the ethical construct of Bahamian Pentecostals that heretofore has never been attempted. The importance of such an exploration to Caribbean Pentecostalism is found in the value of Ethics as a defining characteristic of this fast-growing dimension of Christianity. As noted by Todd Johnson, Pentecostals have grown from approximately 1million adherents in 1910 to approximately 600 million in

2010.⁴ This significant growth invites descriptive classification that would provide a level of understanding of this Christian phenomenon. The aversion to define a religious movement in terms of its ethics becomes a hindrance to progress in terms of legitimacy and growth. Further, the absence of a tangible or repeatable set of ethics, it undermines the ability of that entity to have a voice in the society to influence moral and social issues affecting its adherents as well as the nation; the lack of a clear ethical code becomes a question of credibility versus hypocrisy.

1.1 Definitions

The key themes of this thesis will address three main areas:

1.1.1 Pentecostal

Definitions arising from the noted Azusa Street revival of Los Angeles California in 1906 include five points according Vinson Synan: Justification, sanctification, baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues, divine healing and the premillennial second coming of Christ.⁵ Since that time this definition has been nuanced to include spirited worship; expanded to include a social dimension called “Progressive Pentecostalism” by Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori where Pentecostals have active social ministries in response to their evolving understanding of their mission⁶, and hallmarked by

⁴ Johnson, Todd M. "Counting Pentecostals Worldwide", *Pneuma* 36, 2: 265-288, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/10.1163/15700747-03602006>

⁵ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* Introduction by Vinson Synan [Bridge-Logos Gainesville Florida] 1980 p xiv.

⁶ Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* [University of California Press Berkeley and Los Angeles California] 2007 p. (Yamamori 2007) 2

global expansion as noted by Allan Anderson who writes, “Pentecostals believe that they are called to be witnesses for Jesus Christ to the farthest reaches of the globe in obedience to Christ’s commission.”⁷ While definitions of Pentecostalism may vary according to the culture or society where it is practiced, what seems to be a constant is the significance of the Bible. Andrew Davies suggests that Pentecostals read the Bible in order to find God in the text and accordingly interpret scripture from an experiential perspective more than from an exegetical modality.⁸ These definitions begin the framing of this religious movement that has spread in a fiery fashion around the globe. While the 1906 Azusa street phenomenon is not necessarily the only locus of Pentecostal combustion worldwide, in terms of the Bahamas this is “where the baby pictures are located.” The Bahamas holds the historical distinction as the first Pentecostal mission outside the United States. Its close proximity to the United States perhaps played a role in that decision.

1.1.2 Bahamas

The Bahamas is an archipelago of some 700 islands beginning some 80 miles off the east coast of Florida stretching north of Cuba to its most southern island coming within a close proximity to the Turks and Caicos Islands in the Caribbean. The population is approximately 400,000 with the majority of its inhabitants residing in the Capital city of Nassau on the island of New Providence, which is 21 miles long and 7 miles wide, having an area of some 80 square miles. Its main

⁷ Allan Anderson, *To The Ends of The Earth* Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity [Oxford University Press, New York] 2013 p.

⁸ Andrew Davies, “What Does it Mean to Read the Bible as A Pentecostal?” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* Vol. 18 Issue 2 Pages 216-229, 2009

industries are tourism and financial services. Its close proximity to the United States made it an easy location for initial efforts of missions. Indeed, The Bahamas was the first country outside of the U.S. where the Pentecostal movement linked to the Azusa Street Revival touched down. Hence the Bahamas is an ideal locus of study considering the Africanized cultural exposure stemming from slavery to the ethnic variety of a European occupied territory. Included in this Bahamian culture is the inculcation of sounds and rhythms from these foreign influences as music plays a notable role in the Bahamian way of life. What does Pentecostalism look like in this environment? And what characterizes the ethics of Bahamian Pentecostals? These questions will be answered by the research undertaken in this thesis.

1.1.3 Ethics

Arthur Holmes writes, “Ethics is about the good (that is, what values and virtues we should cultivate) and about the right (that is, what our moral duties may be). It examines alternative views of what is good and right; it explores ways of gaining the moral knowledge we need; it asks why we ought to do right; and it brings all this to bear on the practical moral problems that arouse such thinking in the first place.”⁹

Generally speaking, ethics function to guide the actions and decisions of an individual such that he or she should do the right thing. Ethics as a practice however, usually goes unnoticed until the actions or decisions of the individual press against the boundaries that have historically existed. When you have an

⁹ Arthur F. Holmes *Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions*, InterVarsity Press, 1994. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bham/detail.action?docID=3316780>.

organization or group of individuals who identify themselves via a particular umbrella, then the collective actions and decisions that are exercised become the branding icons of that organization or group and can be considered that group's ethic. Accordingly, ethics is paramount to the legitimacy of the organization and reflects the level of influence it could have in the society in terms of its ability to demonstrate through practice what it purports to be. This practice of ethics in the Pentecostal context is preferably understood from the way Pentecostals interpret their method of interaction with the world that allows them to remain consistent with their core values. It must be appreciated that Pentecostalism is a lifestyle that is predicated on an inextricable presence of God in all that is seen, experienced or practiced as noted by Andrew Davies how Pentecostals read the Bible with an expectation of an encounter with God, and as such, any attempts to define itself will invariably include references to this theological underpinning. Daniel Castelo argues that for Pentecostals to frame their identity and mission it is helpful to break down their doxology into 2 practice-orientations: abiding and waiting.¹⁰ These two modalities provide the vehicle through which Pentecostals form an 'epicleptic' community. In other words abiding and waiting allow a deeper inspection of how Pentecostal ethics function through the irrevocable notion that this Pentecostal community expresses its life through the complete inculcation of the Spirit in its lifestyle. Abiding, as Castelo purports, is the active part of Pentecostal spirituality that involves the individual aligning his/herself to the life of God as revealed by the Spirit. It also refers to the dwelling of the Spirit in the individual to the extent that he/she is directed by the Spirit of God.

¹⁰ Daniel Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics The Epicleptic Community* CPT Press Cleveland Tennessee 2012

Waiting refers to the that time prior to the anticipated divine encounter where the individual exercises an unrelenting faith that however long the waiting might be, there is a definitive terminus that concludes in the presence of God. Castelo suggests that this divine encounter can't be coerced at the will of the individual but is experienced at the total will of God's perfect timing. This 'waiting space' is the developer of hope that feeds the other dimensions of the Pentecostal's existence. For example, the spirited worship stems from this hope that is developed while waiting. It is strengthened by the knowledge of a definitive terminus that invites the open reception of God's presence in the worship experience. As I contemplate these depictions of the Pentecostal *modus operandii* in the world, Castelo's practice orientations refer directly to the individual Pentecostal and his or her interaction with Pentecostalism *per se* but they alone fall short of articulating the way the Pentecostal engages the world. They do provide insight into the Pentecostal way of being in the world but discovering how the Pentecostal chooses to participate in the environment that surrounds their day to day existence is important to provide additional exposure to the ethics of this iconic movement. I will use the term "doing" as the reference to how the Pentecostal engages the world externally. While I am not suggesting that in the process of abiding and waiting there is no interaction with the world but rather 'doing' refers to a category of activity that is wholistically external and is the visible expression of ethics. 'Doing' then, can be divided into two avenues. One is necessarily determined by what the Pentecostal actually does every day. And two, what the Pentecostal actively participates in from an intentional missionary agenda. This discussion will be juxtaposed with a look at what is put forth as the way Pentecostals ought to engage the world in terms of its own

mantra and evaluate the transferability of their stated culture. Accordingly, it seems logical to have this discussion continue under a broader review of the Pentecostal lifestyle.

1.2 Lifestyle

Lifestyle observations provides an empirical representation of how the Pentecostal defines Pentecostalism and what the body of ethics consists of in terms of beliefs and practices. The way a person lives reflects the essence of their understanding or interpretation of who they are. In other words, the lifestyle practiced by anyone speaks to what they believe about life and their role in it. What is aspired to, as the lifestyle of choice is the lifestyle they take ownership of and proclaim publicly. However, nothing is more telling about an individual's actual worldview and their place along the spectrum to the achievement of the ideal, than the lifestyle they currently engage and model to their children and the public at large. Certainly, with few exceptions, what they are persuaded is best, good and beneficial comes out in their lifestyle aspirations or public statement of ethics. However, what is practiced and repeated, speaks to a comfort zone that is acceptable within the frame of lifestyle proclamation. Considering the likelihood of there being differences between the ideal and reality, it becomes important to separate lifestyle ideals from that which is actually done on a repetitive basis. Lifestyle therefore may be defined on two prongs, one being the aspiration of the ideal and the other being the actual delivery or expression of that ideal. For example the aspiration might be to 'love your enemy.' The delivery or expression of that love can take many forms e.g. behave as if nothing happened; doing the positive thing although you have an

opportunity to cause them pain or discomfort; or pray for them while avoiding direct contact.

In looking at the Pentecostal, it would appear that lifestyle for them reflects the foundation of what is believed to be an alignment with God. This common thread running through Pentecostalism appears to focus on a pursuit of God. Depending on cultural traditions and geographical influences this pursuit may manifest in different ways. Notwithstanding this, for the Pentecostal to be described as 'in tune' with God is to put a smile on the face of moral achievement. This would represent the ideal moral achievement. But the question arises, what is the nature of the Pentecostal lifestyle? It can be said that all Christians wish to be in alignment with God, however, what distinguishes the Pentecostal approach? In reflecting on the distinctives of Pentecostalism it becomes necessary to consider its roots in holiness.

Margaret Paloma suggests that the Pentecostal worldview is an amalgamation of the Spirit and Scriptures into everyday life such that miracles, prophecies, healings and divine intervention into the human environment are normative.¹¹ What is interesting about this observation is that it gives the feel that the Pentecostal does not separate or compartmentalize his or her system of beliefs but rather incorporates them into day-to-day activities. It further suggests a sort of 'all or none' approach to their way of living. If they are convinced that

¹¹ Margaret Paloma, "The Spirit Bade Me Go: Pentecostalism and Global Religion," *Association for Sociology of Religion* [August 2000] under "Hartford Institute for Religion Research," <http://www.hirr.hartsem.edu> [accessed April 18, 2014]

including or excluding certain behaviours or activities is in alignment with God, then it is necessary to include or exclude them from personal lifestyle. This incorporation of the Scriptures into the daily living of the Pentecostal lends towards the literal interpretation of the scriptures; it becomes 'recipe-like' in application of the Biblical text. From a hermeneutic perspective this literal interpretation may create some challenges but in discovering the nature of the Pentecostal worldview it remains within the Pentecostal objective to pursue God. Worldview is a term I have used here to describe one's overall perspective or approach to life's questions - in other words, one's ethics and belief system wrapped up in one. This approach as previously mentioned, naturally places great significance on the Bible as the source of ethical conduct and lifestyle. While it will become necessary to examine the Pentecostal hermeneutic at some point, this worldview reflects in part, the Pentecostal approach to Christian living.

Paloma's remarks define, from her perspective, Pentecostals and their lifestyle. She suggests, as an accepted given, that the Spirit and the Bible are major pillars in the framing of how a Pentecostal lives. So it would follow that Pentecostals develop their way of life from the incorporation of these elements into their environment. From this viewpoint Pentecostals find it necessary to relate all of life to these Pillars. This focused approach toward the Bible and Spirit has generated a criticism that Pentecostals are somewhat unconcerned about social issues, politics and the injustices of the wider society. They are accused of being so spiritually minded that they are indifferent, oblivious or simply refuse to engage society with regard to injustices and questions of global ethics,

particularly on a political level for fear of becoming spiritually contaminated. Paul Freston suggests with regard to Pentecostals in Latin America, “Pentecostal churches... see politics as a demonic space and advocate electing men of God, chosen by them, to exorcize it.”¹² This reference to Pentecostalism in Latin America is demonstrative of the attempt to overcome the resistance to political engagement by Pentecostals through incorporating the Pentecostal ethic by offering themselves as political candidates with a view to sanitize the “demonic space” of politics. However, in this particular case alluded to by Freston, the attempt to influence Political ethics in this way is possibly an unwitting encouragement of the idea that Pentecostals should avoid politics in that a large portion of the Pentecostal political candidates in Brazil in 2006 were themselves a part of a corruption scandal. Notwithstanding this, there were other Pentecostal political candidates who were not tainted with negative activity. Nonetheless, despite the apparent ethical compromise of some Pentecostal political candidates in this particular scenario, the attempt to impact the political sphere is indicative of the changing desire to redefine Pentecostalism in this area of criticism of social and political avoidance.

Allan Anderson points out that Pentecostalism is actually uniquely positioned to respond to the plight of the marginalized owing to the overwhelming appeal of this category of persons to this movement.¹³ His intimation serves as a call to not only be Pentecostal in terms of incorporating the ‘Word of God’ and the ‘Holy

¹² Paul Freston in Donald Miller, Kimon Sargent and Richard Flory *Spirit and Power: The Growth and Global Impact of Pentecostalism* Oxford Scholarship Online 2013

¹³ Allan Anderson, “A ‘Time to Share Love’: Global Pentecostalism and the Social Ministry of David Yonggi Cho,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 21 [2012] 152-167

Spirit' into personal lifestyle, but also to be Pentecostal in affecting these tenets in the wider society that impacts our world. Anderson further suggests that there are pockets of Pentecostalism doing precisely this but there remains a void within the movement that sees it vital to the faith to take up the challenge.¹⁴ Considering Anderson's remarks it becomes challenging to present a definitive description of a Pentecostal worldview that can be applicable across the board. Without sufficient uniformity of practice within the Pentecostal movement it may be unfair to represent a particular lifestyle as uniquely Pentecostal. We can step back and simply list the generally accepted practices and eliminate some emerging views that may have universal merit in the future. However this would not allow a deep examination of the importance of the way of life to the Pentecostal. On the other hand, a closer reflection within particular locations and or cultures would tend to permit a more authentic representation of lifestyle for that group. Yet, what would be found could not initially be applied universally. Indeed Pentecostalism as a global movement is experiencing growing pains, challenges of identity while struggling for legitimacy. This is not necessarily a bad thing or something that Pentecostalism should be ashamed of. It says Pentecostalism is on a journey, a quest for God and an understanding of its place in Christian mission. The Pentecostal's place is a function of its particular approach to the Christian mandate, which in turn fosters its determination to remain true to its '*raison d'être*.'

Anderson's remarks warrant further discussion here: Why is it that the marginalized tend to find Pentecostalism appealing? Is the appeal of Pentecostalism related to the lifestyle of those who constantly face challenges,

¹⁴ Ibid.

ranging from basic survival to the opportunity to excel in life? Perhaps there is a bit of similarity of struggle in that Pentecostalism was at some point considered the marginalized of the Christians--In some quarters it may still be viewed as a fringe group. Indeed it would not be unfair to consider that entities with similar views and general approach to life would tend to find common ground. Could the appeal of Pentecostalism be related to a worldview that a connection to God is required to change the existing circumstances that have oppressed and hindered one's state in life? If the marginalized identify with Pentecostalism because of their sense of struggle, when the perceived struggle would have waned would the congruency of lifestyle be lost and would Pentecostalism still maintain its appeal in this category of persons? Further, would Pentecostalism still look the same as its origins in terms of authenticity?

Kimberley Alexander writes, "To remain authentic, Pentecostalism must...reflect its original spiritual witness. That witness...cannot be reduced to "text and texture," "style and substance," or even "doctrinal distinctives." It is, rather, a living faith, one that is experienced in community."¹⁵ Alexander weighs in on the challenge of defining the Pentecostal lifestyle and is careful to make us aware that the uniqueness of Pentecostalism is such that it needs a different approach to studying its core beyond the traditional tools of scholarship.

One particular means of study that falls in this category of non-traditional methods is that of music. In terms of its ability to connect with the Pentecostal on an ethical level, musical melodies containing lyrics infused with concepts and principles found acceptable to the Pentecostal can be enjoyed as entertainment

¹⁵ Kimberley Alexander, "Presidential Address 2011 Standing at the Crossroads: The Battle for the Heart and Soul of Pentecostalism," *Pneuma* 33[2011]: 331-349

while ethics are reinforced through repeated playing and even singing along with songs. Music as a method of ethical expression is one that is experienced as part of the Pentecostal lifestyle because it operates on both an individual and a community level. This concept will be explored further as we review the sources from which Pentecostals draw their ethics.

Kimberley Alexander suggests that we avoid the urge to simply portray the movement as a set of distinctives, a particular style of worship or an approach to Scripture but that it requires an experience in the community that is alive and active. While this indeed may be true, it is equally important in my view, that these academic tools she is shying away from, are used to assist in the understanding of Pentecostalism. If it were not growing so quickly or touching the traditional mainline denominations this would not be of much interest in theological circles. But its sheer magnitude of influence demands reflection, discussion, examination and definition, that we not miss what may be one of the most transforming phenomena in Christianity. At the same time, Alexander's call for Pentecostals to remain authentic is important; that its core not be lost in the press for getting an academic handle on this growing wave.

This apparent fear of identity loss presented by Alexander suggests a warning to Pentecostals to remain true to who they are as they adapt to a postmodern environment. Along with postmodernism there are additional categories of persons who traditionally have not been so inclined to consider Pentecostalism as a viable avenue for a Christian lifestyle, embracing this movement that in their view provides opportunity for alignment with and the pursuit of God.

McGuire notes that Pentecostalism has in recent times been drawing educated middle-class persons who normally attend traditional Protestant churches. She

asks the similar question, what is the pull that precipitates a major departure from style of religious practice these persons have been socialized to since childhood?¹⁶ McGuire's findings point to "Spirit Baptism" as a separate spiritual experience and a heavy focus on "community."¹⁷ It is interesting that this idea of a community experience persists over several decades. It speaks to the suggestion that within the scope of Christianity there is desire to align with God and if existing religious formats do not seem to embrace this quest there is an adaptation or incorporation of a vehicle that meets this perceived need. The Pentecostal lifestyle appears to exude a strong sense of community that provides a secure expression of faith and an avenue to more fully embrace the 'Spirit' thus Pentecostalism is increasingly seen as the viable option for the traditionally Protestant Christian who possesses a sense of spiritual and communal lacking. The idea of community arising out of a common circumstance or idea is not a new one but has been the subject of a familiar cliché. The strong community face of Pentecostalism tends to draw on this principle such that wherever there is sufficient agreement on status in life, struggles encountered, or goals pursued; there is fertile ground for the Pentecostal lifestyle to appear attractive. Although there are consistencies, it should be accepted that the Pentecostal lifestyle today is not exactly the same as the lifestyle that characterized its original generations. Newer audiences are becoming a part of this movement that heretofore was considered far-fetched. As a consequence this is naturally

¹⁶ Meredith McGuire, "Toward a Sociological Interpretation of the Catholic Pentecostal Movement," *Review of Religious Research* Vol. 16 No. 2 [1975]: 94-104

¹⁷ Ibid.

creating a new dynamic and permits an influx of new perspectives that would in due course impact worldview and lifestyle practiced.

Wonsuk Ma writes that the historical shunning of intellectual pursuits and academia by Pentecostals was due to the perceived reduction of spirituality that would result. However, he notes that Asian Pentecostalism has seemingly pushed beyond this stigma and has gathered sufficient adherents to this new thrust that they are producing Pentecostal institutions of higher learning. He notes there are four accredited schools in Korea, two in Japan, three in the Philippines, Three in Singapore, two in Malaysia, two in Indonesia and four in India. In addition, there are new academic journals dedicated to Pentecostalism and research institutes emerging on the scene.¹⁸ Ma's findings suggest the lifestyle of the Pentecostal at least in the Asian context is becoming fluid as it adapts to new influences from the realm of academia. What is important about lifestyle to the Pentecostal is that it remain authentic to who they are as Pentecostals. It seems that as long as the Pentecostal still thinks he/she is Pentecostal then it is okay to spread the wings of change. Interestingly, there does not appear to be resistance to this fluidity of lifestyle but rather a sense of warranted catching-up after an extended nap.

It would seem that the concept of community continues to surface as the driving factor for the growth of the Pentecostal lifestyle. C.L. Smith writes that migrating Latin American peasants are welcomed into the cities by Pentecostal churches giving them a sense of community and fellowship that they find irresistible. Families are renewed and strengthened by being deliberately guided and

¹⁸ Wonsuk Ma, "Asian Pentecostalism: a religion whose only limit is the sky" *Journal of Beliefs and Values* Vol. 25 No. 2 [2004] 191-204

transformed to make better socioeconomic choices and thus provide upward social mobility in short order. Political expression is diverse and does not appear to fall in any one category.¹⁹ Smith's findings are consistent with prevailing notions of the Pentecostal lifestyle avoiding direct political involvement although there are some examples of such. However, the appeal of Pentecostalism coming from the poorer classes of the society remain a significant part of the pool. With Latin America being the nearest Caribbean neighbour it would not be too far of a stretch to suggest the same appeal of Pentecostalism would tend to be to poorer classes in this area inclusive of the Bahamas.

Interestingly though, with respect to the Bahamas, there was appeal from both the working class as well as the prominent in the beginnings of the movement in the Bahamas. Edmund Barr and his wife Rebecca were the first Bahamian Pentecostal converts/missionaries who were in Florida at the time they received the 'Pentecostal blessing'. Indicators suggest they were working there as a part of an exodus of Bahamian labourers due to the slow economic times in the Bahamas.²⁰ Arabella Eneas the first Bahamian convert residing in the Bahamas was from a prominent family. Her conversion to Pentecostalism came by way of a healing experience.²¹ She and her husband's subsequent social encounters as a result of their conversion was dramatic and forced them out of their previous community and into a new Pentecostal group that was focused on the pursuit of experiencing a closer relationship with God. This pursuit became attractive to

¹⁹ Calvin Smith, "Pentecostal presence power and politics in Latin America" *Journal of Beliefs and Values* Vol. 30 No. 3 [2009] 219-229

²⁰ Christopher Moree "Pentecostalism in the Bahamas" *History and Heritage* [Church of God Summer/Fall 1999], 1-11

²¹ Cleveland W. Eneas *Let The Church Roll On* [Cleveland and Muriel Eneas P. O. Box 1257 Superior Printing Services Nassau, Bahamas] 1976

others and created a novel excitement in the city. A lot of the methods employed at this early stage of Pentecostalism's birth in the Bahamas became the standard way of doing in the years ahead. In particular, the use of "Tent meetings" accompanied with brass band music as an iconic drawing factor.

In summary, the lifestyle of the Pentecostal is tied to his or her worldview and belief of what it means to be Pentecostal. It is not just a statement of faith but for the Pentecostal it involves the integration of that worldview into daily living activities, thoughts and decisions. This reason for being is then supported and perhaps validated by the juxtaposition of what is considered ideal and what is actually practiced. This delineation forms the two streams from which Pentecostal ethics can be examined. Historiography becomes an important tool that includes a reflection on the developmental origins of both and how they interact, complement or oppose one another.

1.3 Example - An ethical challenge for the Bahamas: Slavery and Abolition

28th August 2017 marked the 54th Anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Its celebration around the world brought attention to the social injustices and dehumanization of society through the ideological practice of slavery. As a once state supported institution, the ethical barometer of the populace of the day and the succeeding generations up to now has been deeply affected. What is now seen are the derivatives, adaptations and evolution of a mindset found at the root of slavery, that all men are not created equal. This mindset translates into behavior and conversation that becomes an affront to one or more groups of people who find themselves in the category of the marginalized and oppressed.

With respect to the Bahamas, this culture of slavery was not exempt but rather adopted the ways of the neighbour to the north. The influx of the Loyalists from North America in particular New York along with their slaves in 1783 added to the impact on the slave culture in the Bahamas as it included 1600 whites and 5700 slaves. It is noted that these loyalists made the attempt to re-enslave the freed blacks who were promised freedom if they fought for the British. However, this promise seemed not to be kept and created great tensions and a deep racial division

ensued.²² This along with the vices of the additional influential neighbours combined to create a deeply embedded culture of discrimination.

In the case of Latin America which by virtue of proximity is also the case of the Bahamas, the issue of slavery is one that is at the core of humanity's definition of itself. The question arises, what is the value of a person? In response to this question, supporters of the Spanish agenda in the New World subscribed to philosophies that consoled their sins. Ondina and Justo González write, "Scottish theologian John Mair held that natives of the Americas were 'natural slaves.' Mair drew on Aristotle's description of human beings as "natural slaves" or "natural masters."²¹ The ethical dial continued to be pushed as Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, a royal chaplain, promoted the notion of the inferiority of Indians. González writes of Sepúlveda speaking about the Indians "who in prudence, wisdom...,every virtue and humanity are as inferior to the Spaniards as children are to adults, women are to men, the savage and ferocious to the gentle, the grossly intemperate to the continent and the temperate and finally I shall say [are] almost as monkeys are to men."²³ These sentiments were the predominant ones for many years but there were opposing voices that pushed back against the blinding pursuit of vanity in terms of wealth and power leading to the eventuality of slavery's demise.

²² Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream, Volume I: A History of the Bahamian People: From Aboriginal Times to the End of Slavery* University of Georgia Press, 1992

²³ Ondina E. González and Justo L. González. *Christianity in Latin America: A History* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 44

The debate became so provocative that the lessons taught are still applicable today as the ethical dial continues to be pulled in varying directions. However, the way of thinking that supported the slave trade and consequently the way people will be treated in the future did not end with a verbal statement recanting support or an official writ declaring the abolition of the practice. We can compare this to the habit of smoking; It is not broken simply because it is declared a “bad” habit. When it comes to a culture of slavery, it will take an extended time of enlightened exposure to better ethical practices such that it becomes the new norm affecting behavior, speech and mindset.

1.3.1 The Economics of Slavery

For such a systemic vice to persist for centuries is indicative of a driving engine to sustain its existence. Eduardo Galeano writes, “Pepper, ginger, cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon were as prized as salt in preserving meat against putrefaction and loss of flavor in winter. Spain’s Catholic rulers decided to finance the adventure to get direct access to the sources and to free themselves from the burdensome chain of intermediaries and speculators who monopolized the trade in spices and tropical plants, muslins and side-arms, from the mysterious East. The desire for precious metals, the medium of payment in commercial dealings, also sparked the crossing of sinister seas. All of Europe needed silver...”²⁴

²⁴ Eduardo Galeano. *Open Veins of Latin America* [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997], 12

It becomes clear, that the forces of economics began driving the search to meet the demands and comforts of Europe's lifestyle. With this drive developed an overwhelming need for labor to procure these goods. In addition, it would appear that the pursuit of wealth lay at the heart of the development of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Not only were there profits to be gained from the parties seeking slaves but also from the suppliers. In an article from the University of Calgary, "The most significant imports into Africa during the trans-Atlantic trade were money, firearms, alcohol, iron goods, and textiles in exchange for slaves."²⁵ On behalf of those seeking slaves, the Anti-Slavery organization writes, "The search for African slaves was fuelled by the need to supply cheap labor for the plantations (or commercial farms) begun by Europeans outside their own borders."²⁶ As we examine the history of movement of people into Latin America, we see a domineering quest for economic gain.

Even before the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the birthing of slave practices was well under way among the Indians discovered in the New World.

Ondina and Justo Gonzalez write, "Encomienda. An old Spanish institution that rewarded the efforts of soldiers...In the Americas, encomendero, or holder of the encomienda was required to treat his charges well and protect and Christianize them. In exchange, Indians were to work for the encomendero in whatever capacity he chose. In the Caribbean, Indians were parceled out to settlers who could

²⁵ The Applied History Research Group "The Impact of the Slave Trade" http://www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/migrations/four5b.html [accessed August 23, 2014]

²⁶ Anti-Slavery "Breaking the Silence: Learning about the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Participants and Profitability" <http://www.antislavery.org/breakingthesilence> [accessed August 21, 2014]

demonstrate a need for laborers in mining, farming, or any other effort they might undertake. In theory the Indians were considered free and allowed to exercise that freedom within limits; in reality, the encomienda was slavery.”²⁷ So, early on into the arrival of the Europeans in the New World, profits pervaded their pursuits and dictated their practices. This to the point of searing the conscience of generations that to this day still struggles with the by-products of its enculturation. Slavery was indeed big business. A whole new industry was developed and thrived around its practice. The forceful arrival of the Europeans into the New World brought diseases and illnesses unfamiliar to the Indians’ immune system thus they were instantly vulnerable to these foreign viruses and bacterial infections. The Anti-Slavery organization writes, “The Portuguese and Spanish soon found that indigenous Amerindians did not have the immunity from European diseases to make a dependable slave force.”²⁸ This discovery in part precipitated a shift toward the African market.

Hans-Jürgen Prien writes, “The widespread deaths of the original inhabitants of the Antilles created a scarcity of manpower, be it for gold panning, be it for food production. This led to calls for African slaves, justified by appealing to their assumed greater physical strength and cloaking this demand with the sanctimonious observation that it would allegedly spare Indians’ lives. Slaves were indispensable for the gold production cycle and would soon accompany the

²⁷ Ondina E. González and Justo L. González. *Christianity in Latin America: A History* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 29

²⁸ Anti-Slavery “Breaking the Silence: Learning about the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Participants and Profitability”
<http://www.antislavery.org/breakingthesilence> [accessed August 21, 2014]

conquistadors on their campaigns, exactly as the Portuguese used acculturated slaves to staff their slavery ships.”²⁹

What was taking shape was a colonial economy that existed to enrich the European nations and simultaneously descend the Americas into a consistently subservient role. Galeano writes, “Gold, silver, sugar: the colonial economy, supplying rather than consuming, was built in terms of—and at the service of—the European market. During long periods of the sixteenth century the value of Latin American precious metal exports was four times greater than the value of the slaves, salt, and luxury goods it imported. The resources flowed out so that emergent European nations across the ocean could accumulate them. This was the basic mission of the pioneers, although they applied the Bible almost as often as the whip to the dying Indians. The Spanish colonies’ economic structure was born subordinated to the external market and was thus centralized around the export sector, where profit and power were concentrated.”³⁰

Tragically, this was done under the cover of Christianity and as a result, has created skepticism of the global church as hypocritical to the gospel they preach. Consolation comes from the fact that there were segments of the church that opposed slavery even though they were in the minority. This scenario becomes a teaching point for Christendom to listen to the small voices of controversy and not dismiss them simply because their view is incongruent with the majority.

²⁹ Hans-Jürgen Prien. *Christianity in Latin America* [Leiden: Brill, 2013], 126

³⁰ Eduardo Galeano. *Open Veins of Latin America* [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997], 29

These are the voices that join a chorus of liberation that does not stop with slavery but includes the wider category of the oppressed.

1.3.2 The Injustice of Slavery

“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Timothy 6:9-10 NKJV.

This scripture reveals with great clarity the injustices that follow the blind pursuit of riches. It bears the truth of what took place in the New World and Europe with respect to the treatment of those providing unpaid labor for the economic gain of others. I do not believe there were any positive accounts of the slave experience by the slaves themselves such that they would want this vice to remain. As a matter of fact the extreme opposite would be a fairer representation of what was taking place. That alone is indicative of the inhumane nature of the practice. There was overwhelming concern for personal survival and mental sanity among the oppressed; it created such fear that drastic measures were taken by slaves to prevent future generations from experiencing the burden of the parents. It all became unbearable and escape, in whatever form was deemed preferable.

Ondina and Justo González write, “Las Casas had witnessed in the conquest of Cuba and that were of such a nature that men and women hanged themselves and even strung up their own children [in order to escape the horrors of enslavement to the

encomenderos]. As a direct result of the barbarity of one Spaniard...more than two hundred locals committed suicide, countless thousands in all dying this way.”³¹

The proliferation of slavery and its link to the pursuit of material gain is unmistakable. Sidney Rooy writes,

“The Dutch West India Company had the exclusive right to transport and trade slaves from the African coast during this period. The company followed the path of most large corporations that dominate society even today and forsook the humane, Christian principles of seeking the good of others. Like most corporations, their main goal was neither seeking the common good nor fostering the creation of a community where justice, as understood by the gospel, reigns. Rather, its principal, though not exclusive, objective was to make as much money as possible for its owners. Its leaders did not take responsibility for the wounded they left in the wake of their cruel exploitation or for the irreversible damage they wrought on many of their own employees.”³²

His article gives a clear glimpse of the motivations, sins and propellants that continued to push the slave industry forward. An article in Real Histories tells us how there was a drastic reduction in population size of the Bolivian Andes when Spain came-a-calling. Potosí was a rich mining town that became the richest in the world from 1556-1783 with a population over 200,000. During this time some 45,000 tons of silver was mined and 7,000 of it went to the Spanish Monarchy. “Initially, forced indigenous labor was used to mine and refine the silver, but exposure to European diseases, mercury and brutality led the population to plummet by a catastrophic 90%. To compensate for the loss of indigenous labor, African slaves were transported in great numbers to Potosí—an estimated 30,000

³¹ Ondina E. González and Justo L. González. *Christianity in Latin America: A History* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 31

³² Sidney Rooy. “Religious Tolerance and the Arrival of Protestantism in Latin America” *Journal of Latin American Theology*, 6 no 2 2011, p 49

Africans were taken to Potosí throughout the colonial era....African slaves were forced to push mills in the royal mint as human mules. The lifespan of a mule pushing mills was only two months so slaves were deemed more cost effective.”³³ The physical and mental injustices continued to extreme measures as highlighted by Galeano when he writes, “The Caribbean island populations finally stopped paying tribute because they had disappeared; they were totally exterminated in the gold mines, in the deadly task of sifting auriferous sands with their bodies half submerged in water, or in breaking up the ground beyond the point of exhaustion, doubled up over the heavy cultivating tools brought from Spain. Many natives of Haiti anticipated the fate imposed by their white oppressors; they killed their children and committed mass suicide. The mid-sixteenth-century historian Fernández de Oviedo interpreted the Antillean holocaust thus: “Many of them, by way of diversion, took poison rather than work, and others hanged themselves with their own hands.”³⁴

We can ask ourselves the question, what would drive an individual to consider ending his or her life and that of their children? The answer must include levels of such despair, such hopelessness of relief from pain and overwhelming depression of the human spirit that exiting life became a viable option. These indeed were dark times and demonstrated the depths of man’s ability to be enveloped by darkness to the point of coercing another human being to such fatal consequences. Should not

³³ The Real Histories Directory: Slavery in Latin America.
<http://www.realhistories.org.uk/articles/archive/slavery-in-latin-america.html>
[accessed 8/29/14]

³⁴ Eduardo Galeano. *Open Veins of Latin America* [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997], 15

this alone cause sufficient stir in the society that an uprising of conscience, and ethics would develop a reversal of this heinous norm?

Ondina and Justo González write,

“As a result of this forced labor system and the accompanying disruption of family and community structures, diet, and their very way of life, thousands of people died. For Hispaniola, hotly debated pre-contact population figures range from two hundred thousand to 12 million or more. While the number of inhabitants on the island before the arrival of the Spaniards is unclear, what is clear is that by 1509, there were only around sixty-two thousand [a decline of just under 95% on the high end to 69% on the low end]. By 1540 there were a few hundred Indians left on the island.”³⁵

The trans-Atlantic slave trade provides another sector of industry that was wrought with conditions and practices that were alarming but nonetheless consistent with those found elsewhere.

Unesco writes, “During the slave trade, Africans had endured months in cramped and unhygienic quarters and as they were usually in a very poor state of health, they were often held for a while before sale to fatten them up, to increase their sales price.”³⁶

“The slave trade and slavery took a heavy toll in human lives. Initially the European slave traders had obtained slaves by raids on West African coastal settlements. The slave traders however subsequently realized that an easier way to obtain slaves was to form alliances with African leaders whom they supplied with arms and encouraged to make war on their neighbors. They could then purchase their ally’s prisoners of war and obtain supplies of slaves without having to fire a shot themselves.”³⁷

³⁵ Ondina E. González and Justo L. González. *Christianity in Latin America: A History* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 29-30

³⁶ Spotlight on Memory of the World Heritage: Slavery in the Caribbean and Latin America. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources> [accessed August 15, 2014]

³⁷ Anti-Slavery “Breaking the Silence: Learning about the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Participants and Profitability” <http://www.antislavery.org/breakingthesilence> [accessed August 21, 2014]

It would seem that slaves were reduced to a simple commodity to be hunted and captured and then merchandised for sale. The writings of Bernal Díaz del Castillo bring this to bear,

“The chiefs who accompanied us were showing us what was there. Each kind of merchandise was in a particular area, and they all had their places clearly determined. Let us begin by the merchant of gold and silver and precious stones and feathers and capes and crafts, as well as of the Indians who were there as merchandise, as slaves both male and female. I say they brought so many of them to sell at that plaza as the Portuguese bring blacks from Guniea. They brought them tied to long rods, and with rings on their necks, so they could not escape. But others were loose.”³⁸

To grasp the extent of this trade we look at the estimates from The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database on the numbers of slaves transported between 1501-1525, which was **13,363** and compare to the peak period of 1776-1800 the numbers were **2,008,670**.³⁹ The numbers gives us perspective on the levels of abuse that can be imagined taking place in the movement of these vast numbers of people as well as the sheer greed that drove the industry.

1.3.3 The position of the Catholic Church

With the seemingly intertwined economic, social and moral agendas coexisting in Latin American history, it is important to examine the position of the Catholic Church on this issue since the majority of what was taking place was laid at the feet of Christianity as the biggest patron of the practice. Ondina and Justo González puts

³⁸ Bernal Díaz del Castillo *historia verdadera de la conquista de Nueva España* [Barcelona: Editorial Ramon Sopena, 1975], 292-294

³⁹ The Trans-Atlantic slave Trade Database, <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> [accessed August 15, 2014]

it like this, “It was in the midst of the horrific experiences of the Caribbean that we begin to see the two faces of the church in Latin America: the one, an arm of the state that served the needs of the settlers and the other that sought to be the conscience of the conquest and colonization.”⁴⁰ Before a rush to judgment occurs we find that not only were there two faces of the church but also two kinds of parishioners. There were those who followed the official publications of the leadership and those who listened but did their own thing anyway. Unfortunately the latter had a greater attendance.

Brumley writes, “sixty years before Columbus ‘discovered’ the New World, Pope Eugene IV condemned the enslavement of peoples in the newly colonized Canary Islands.”⁴¹ This paints a different picture of the Catholic Church in this regard as some have suggested there was silence on the matter until the 1890’s when abolition was already in place. In the Papal bull entitled *Sicut Dudum* Pope Eugene IV writes, “They have deprived the natives of their property, or turned it to their own use, and have subjected some of the inhabitants of said islands to perpetual slavery, sold them to other persons, and committed other various illicit and evil deeds against them.”⁴² So there appears to be an open rebuke of the practices observable at that time. But it goes further, “within the space of fifteen days of the

⁴⁰ Ondina E. González and Justo L. González. *Christianity in Latin America: A History* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 32

⁴¹ Mark Brumley. “Let My People Go: The Catholic Church and Slavery”, <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/facts/fm0006.html> [accessed September, 12 2014]

⁴² Pope Eugene IV. “Sicut Dudum” [Florence, 1435] <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Eugene04/eugene04sicut.htm> [accessed September, 13 2014]

publication of these letters in the place where they live, that they restore to their earlier liberty all and each person of either sex who were once residents of said Canary Islands, and made captives since the time of their capture, and who have been made subject to slavery. These people are to be totally and perpetually free, and are to be let go without the exaction or reception of money.”⁴³

After the European arrival in the New World the practice of slavery continued unabated prompting Pope Paul III to issue a bull opposing slavery in 1537. He writes, “Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ; and that they may and should, freely and legitimately, enjoy their liberty and the possession of their property; nor should they be in any way enslaved.”⁴⁴ What is significant about this bull is it condemns the argument that the Christianizing of the Indians and Africans was necessary through slavery. Prien writes, “The Code Noir put into effect for the French West Indies in 1685, founded the institution of slavery upon the project of missionizing blacks: All the slaves on our islands are to be baptized and initiated into the Catholic religion.”⁴⁵

Moving forward to 1839 we find Pope Gregory XVI issuing a bull that was directed against the practice of slave trading as well as racial slavery. He writes, “condemned

⁴³ Pope Eugene IV. “Sicut Dudum” [Florence, 1435]
<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Eugene04/eugene04sicut.htm> [accessed September, 13 2014]

⁴⁴ Pope Paul III. “Sublimus Dei” [1537]
<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Paul03/p3subli.htm> [accessed September, 13 2014]

⁴⁵ Hans-Jürgen Prién. *Christianity in Latin America* [Leiden: Brill, 2013], 130

those who should dare 'to reduce to slavery the Indians of the Eastern and Southern Indies,' to sell them, buy them, exchange them or give them, separate them from their wives and children, despoil them of their goods and properties, conduct or transport them into other regions, or deprive them of liberty in any way whatsoever,[or] retain them in servitude... We warn and adjure earnestly in the Lord faithful Christians of every condition that no one in the future dare to vex anyone, despoil him of his possessions, reduce to servitude, or lend aid and favor to those who give themselves up to these practices, or exercise that inhuman traffic by which the Blacks, as if they were not men but rather animals, having been brought into servitude, in no matter what way, are, without any distinction, in contempt of the rights of justice and humanity,"⁴⁶

So we find the official position of the Catholic Church on the issue of slavery as condemning its practice. However, its effectiveness in bringing about an adherence to this prohibition is another issue.

1.3.4 The struggle to end Slavery

There were voices that stood in support of slavery and who would have found themselves among the majority. Prien writes, "Viera's conclusion—without slavery there is no Brazil, and since Brazil must exist, therefore slavery must exist—proves

⁴⁶ Pope Gregory XVI. "In Supremo Apostolatus"[Baltimore 1839]
<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Greg16/g16sup.htm> [accessed August 29, 2013]

him to have been an unequivocal advocate of black slavery.”⁴⁷ This sentiment was expressed in other ways and contexts but still boiled down to support of the practice of slavery. Ondina and Justo González write, “The colonists applied the age-old tradition of *obedezco pero no cumpro* [I obey but I do not comply] which basically meant that they disregarded any provisions within the Laws of Burgos that did not suit them, and they continued to use Indian labor as they saw fit.”⁴⁸

As the slave trade reaches its peak, formal groups to abolish its practice are formed. Looking at the article from Durham University entitled ‘The Struggle to End Slavery: A Timeline’ we see In 1787 the society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade is founded by Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson who push for petitions to be presented to the British Parliament. A year later approximately 100 petitions are submitted, and in 1792 some 519 are presented to Parliament. Enough stir is being created that in 1807 Britain passes the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, which outlaws the British Atlantic slave trade, however slavery itself is still legally supported by the state. It would not be until 5,000 petitions are presented to parliament and in 1833 that the Abolition of slavery Act was passed. The other countries followed suit in 1848 France Abolishes slavery, 1858 Portuguese colonies, and 1861 the Dutch colonies, 1886 Cuba joins the Abolition bandwagon and Brazil is the last in 1888.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Hans-Jürgen Prien. *Christianity in Latin America* [Leiden: Brill, 2013], 137

⁴⁸ Ondina E. González and Justo L. González. *Christianity in Latin America: A History* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 31

⁴⁹ Durham University. The struggle to End Slavery: A Timeline <http://www.dur.ac.uk/4schools/Slavery/timeline.htm> [accessed August 29, 2014]

1.3.5 Implications for Pentecostalism and this study

What can be gathered from this period of history in Latin America is that it is a history that includes the Bahamas. It opens our eyes to the lengths persons will go when affected by the vices of monetary and material gain. It further provides another peg to the ethical table that was present at the time Pentecostalism would have arrived on the shores of the Bahamas. It is interesting that although something may be negative, unsavoury, or simply evil, it can be more difficult to change than we realize. At the same time we can appreciate the tenacity and perseverance of the opposing voices that continued to preach, write and publish their convictions and ultimately overcame a great human transgression. This tenacity and fervor can be compared to that of the early Pentecostals bringing their take on the Gospel as they evangelized the Bahamas. They were not fearful of those who would trample the ethical development of their individual and collective conscience. Rather, they became committed teachers of the ethics of scripture, as they understood it to mean.

The practice of slavery presented an ethical challenge for the Bahamas in terms of accepting the philosophies of the European Slave masters though by coercion, whose mindset having been blinded by greed and a pejorative conscience gave way to approval of economic prosperity at the expensive of human lives considered less than their own. As the attempts to end such a tragic trade came on stream, the tentacles of long-term habits, practices and culturally ingrained ethics would prove difficult to overturn in light of the status quo. However, with the official abolition of slavery a door was opened that would allow the entrance of the Pentecostal

message to the islands of the Bahamas. However, the physical end of slavery did not necessarily mean an end to the mindset of slavery, thus creating an ethical challenge that continues to linger in perhaps non-traditional or more subversive ways in the form of racism. Interestingly, the movement of Pentecostalism had its own challenges and opportunities around race. The idea that all persons were eligible to be a follower of Christ and receive his Salvation irrespective of nationality or cultural background made Pentecostalism a welcomed message to those in slavery who were accustomed to exclusions and biases. Here, they were not just included but invited to participate in an environment of equality that was sanctioned by God as noted in the Bible in the story of Peter and Cornelius. It was a cultural practice for the Jews to not associate with Gentiles [non-Jews]. Cornelius was a Roman Centurion who was a devout believer in God who received a vision to invite Peter, a Jew to hear what God wants to say to him. Peter similarly receives a vision that calls on him to put aside the traditions of the Mosaic Law that separated people and food items into either categories of clean or unclean. So for Peter to go and stay and eat with a gentile is a significant change of ethical practice. It called for Peter to take another look at how he had interpreted the scripture and supported previous cultural norms in this regard and follow the new path that God's grace through Jesus was leading him to do. The interesting issue with Peter in having a two-tiered ethic in that he believed he was doing the right thing in discriminating against certain races while declaring himself a follower of Christ was that this behavioural pattern was adjusted through this spiritually precipitated encounter with Cornelius of another race. As a result of this encounter Peter makes the declaration in Acts 10:34

NRSV “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” This idea of equality of human beings coupled with doing what is right in the sight of God becomes the new ethical standard. It highlights the contradictory ethic that permits two platforms of ethics to coexist. It is a theme that replays in the challenge of Slavery and its eventual abolition. Without this same ethical adjustment undergone by Peter, Pentecostalism would have failed to launch in the Bahamas because of the strong racial discrimination created by slavery. Indeed the first missionaries to the Bahamas, who were black, would have been rejected by the whites on the basis of their race, not allowing the Pentecostal message to even be heard. The subsequent missionaries would have experienced the reverse situation where the blacks would have shunned the whites and counted them with the slave owners in terms of mentality, but because of Abolition, there was sufficient tolerance to permit an entrance of Pentecostalism to the Bahamas.

Sufficient tolerance in this case however, did not mean an ethical alignment with the ideal but it marks the beginning of an ethical evolution. Interestingly, this was the same experience noted at the Azusa street revival in that the “color line was washed away in the blood”⁵⁰ according to Frank Bartleman’s account. In that the races had no prohibitive issue embracing the revival fires side by side. However, what we see here is one expression of two tiers of ethical practice: a stated or public expression of the ideal but a second tier of what is actually done does not necessarily agree with

⁵⁰ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street An eyewitness Account* Gainesville Florida Bridge-Logos, 1980

the first tier, particularly noted with Charles Parham harbouring racist attitudes and behaviour as noted by Allan Anderson.⁵¹ So the impact of slavery on the ethics of the Bahamas includes an inherited two-tiered approach to the way Pentecostalism is practiced. Whether or not this pattern persists and what the ethical landscape looks like currently will be investigated further in this thesis.

⁵¹ Allan Anderson, The Dubious Legacy of Charles Parham: Racism and Cultural Insensitivities among Pentecostals. *Pneuma* Vol 27 Iss. 1 2005 p. 51-64

2. Methodology

A review of the literature exposes a significant gap in terms of any particular reflection of Pentecostal ethics within the Bahamas, however there are notable reflections within the environs of study that are important to this undertaking in providing a cerebral bridge to the context of this thesis. Roger Olson writes, “...Pentecostalism [has] nurtured super-spiritual, otherworldly attitudes among their adherents. The nearly total lack of any books on Pentecostal ethics (especially social ethics) testifies to this problem that is yet to be overcome.⁵² As a witness to this very problem within the Pentecostal community of the Bahamas, the value of research in the area of Pentecostal ethics cannot be understated and scholarly reflection in this area is a much-needed undertaking. Accordingly, findings from this research will be tethered to appropriate presentations of Pentecostal ethics in order to build a model for the Bahamian context. Text-based research will provide an initial backdrop of the context from which ethics are developed. This will be followed by quantitative research of Pentecostal churches in the Bahamas involving a survey method and qualitative research involving focus-group interviews. A discussion of the findings will allow conclusions to be formed and presented as a model for the Bahamas. The data collected from Pentecostal leaders, congregations and focus groups is expected to contribute to the knowledge base of Pentecostal practice and provide new insights to this evolving religious phenomenon.

⁵² Roger Olson, *Pietism and Pentecostalism: Spiritual Cousins or Competitors?* *Pneuma* Vol 34 Iss. 3 2012 p. 319 - 344

Additionally, descriptive research method will be used to develop a clearer understanding of the three methods of data collection engaged in this thesis. Descriptive research hinges on the intersection of more than one method in obtaining the desired data. This is due to the fact that extracting information is not necessarily as easy as it may appear. Nancy Vymeister writes, “The purpose of descriptive research is to collect detailed factual information that describes existing phenomena; Identify problems or justify conditions and practices; Make comparisons and evaluations; determine what others are doing with similar problems or situations and benefit from their experience in making future plans and decisions...The secret for obtaining a complete and accurate description lies in using several approaches, tapping into different sources.”⁵³

Drawing from this, the quantitative and qualitative approach to collecting this data will involve surveying in the form of questionnaires the 3 largest Pentecostal denominations in the Bahamas: the Assemblies of God, The Church of God of Prophecy and The Church Of God, with 3 churches from each denomination. The churches within each denomination were selected as follows: the largest congregation and two others based on the first two to agree to participate in the research project from the order listed in the telephone directory. As an added contribution to the research, focus groups will be engaged to broaden the body of knowledge obtained from the survey results. Focus groups were selected as follows: two volunteers from each of the three churches within the respective denomination. A prototype hypothetical model of ethics will put together from these

⁵³ Nancy Vymeister *Quality Research Papers* [Zondervan Grand Rapids, 2008], 152-153

various methods focused on the active topics of gambling and same-sex marriage. These topics were selected because of the nationwide discussions focused on the same. They presented an ideal opportunity to formulate, through in depth examination, a tentative ethical model for the Bahamian Pentecostal. Each topic under review draws polarizing opinions in the general population and because of its widespread public discussions, the subjects are sufficiently familiar for opinions to be formed and evaluated. Afterwards, the ethical construct developed from this platform will be evaluated in an area of reflection that is emerging: ecotheology, as a test of the hypothetical model of ethics engaged by Bahamian Pentecostals.

2.1 Text-based research

A historiography of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas will be used to set the movement in its cultural context, and to investigate what evidence the historical data can present us with over the nature of biblical engagement and interpretation in this community. This would provide a framework from which to develop our model in terms of ethical development of Pentecostals in the Bahamas. Church Faith/Doctrinal documents will be examined to determine to what extent they explicitly rely on biblical sources and whether they address any ethical issues head-on.

The importance of beginning with an examination of island life in the Bahamas is to demonstrate the various streams of ethical development that come together to form an estuary leading to a reservoir of opinions and beliefs that constitute the Bahamian Pentecostal body of ethics. This ethical environment invariably must

have interacted and adapted to the Pentecostal theological approach coming from the Americanized version of Pentecostalism descending from the 1906 Azusa Street event when the Pentecostal missionaries entered the Bahamas. Prior to this occurrence, we need to consider the wholesale impact of social practices and agendas that affected the course of ethics in the country. In particular, an examination of Bahamian lifestyle after experiencing the challenge of slavery and its plethora of combustive ethical questions and activity in terms of its impact on the social mindset of the Bahamian populous to the extent of making them receptive to the message of Pentecostalism through deliverance from oppression, healing from issues of hate and traumatic occurrences and an opportunity to be counted as having individual worth, irrespective of ethnicity and skin colour. The overarching cultural environment of subjugation and marginalization are themes that continue to resonate with the Bahamian conscience from generation to generation. It begins with Slavery, followed by the aftermath of abolition, which seems to be equally repressive but in more subversive ways. The apparent subtleties of lingering segregationist and discriminatory attitudes in the Bahamas are noted by Gail Saunders who describes the 1834 Abolition Act in the Bahamas as somewhat of a formality but the practices were almost indistinct from that of slavery. She writes, "Early optimism, which marked the ending of formal enslavement and the immediate post-emancipation period, soon evaporated. The former enslaved and apprentices were free, but oppressive labor systems and the difficulties of acquiring land resulted in the steady worsening of their working conditions and material

welfare.”⁵⁴ The mood in the Bahamas at this time is also reflected in the origins of Pentecostalism as noted by David Daniels who writes of the Azusa street event concerning Charles Parham expressing racist behaviour towards the key proponent of the 1906 Revival, William Seymour and others. Yet Daniels notes that Pentecostal leaders of the early 1900’s denounced the ideals of the Ku Klux Klan.⁵⁵ The Ku Klux Klan is a hate organization started in 1866 to suppress the newly received freedoms of slaves resulting from abolition with a particular dislike for blacks and promote an agenda of white supremacy⁵⁶. What is notable is this two-tiered approach to ethics in that there is one facet that represents the ideal and public face of ethics and two, the ethics that is actually practiced. This paradigm is continually expressed throughout the Pentecostal journey. We find it in the A.J. Tomlinson era of Pentecostalism, which is the avenue through which Pentecostalism is traced to arrive in the Bahamas. We have the public face of non-discrimination in that A. J. Tomlinson gives ministerial credentials and ordains the first black ministers in the organization Edmund and Rebecca Barr.⁵⁷ Yet we find in his diary entry of 4 June, 1912: “Held a conference meeting yesterday to consider the question of ordaining Edmund Barr [colored] and setting the colored people off to work amongst

⁵⁴ Saunders, Gail. *Race and Class in the Colonial Bahamas, 1880-1960*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016. <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed January 13, 2019).

⁵⁵ David Daniels III in Vinson Synan: *The Century of The Holy Spirit*, Thomas Nelson Nashville 2001, P. 277

⁵⁶ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica: Ku Klux Klan, Encyclopaedia Inc. 2018, accessed January 2019

⁵⁷ Michael S. Swann *The Holy Jumpers: A Concise History of the Church of God of Prophecy in the Bahamas [1909-1974]* Xulon Press Maitland, Florida 2018, P. 4

themselves on account of the race prejudice in the south.”⁵⁸ This entry is indicative of the two-tiered ethical expression that existed in that the Pentecostal leader continued the pattern of segregation by sending the blacks off to work amongst themselves. This would have been an opportunity for the leadership of the church, in this case A.J. Tomlinson, to take a stand and demonstrate its resolve to push back against the social injustice that existed by demonstrating the treatment of all men equally, even as the message of salvation they promulgated was available to all men equally. An often used scripture in the Pentecostal message is John 3:16 NIV which says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” This scripture is often read with a focus on “whoever” as an all-inclusive term showing no bias toward any particular race which is in contradiction to the practices of the messengers of the same.

This two-tiered ethical pattern is further noted as the Pentecostal missionaries crossed the borders into the Bahamas: a letter written by H.M. Stevenson printed in The Nassau Daily Tribune 24 February, 1911

Dear Sir, Last evening while standing at the Sponge Exchange waiting for a religious service to begin which was being held by two men and two women, I was surprised to hear one of the women open the service by this graceless unchristian remark: “Now then, all you coloured people on one side and the white people on the other.” ...If these people want to lead men to Christ, why this hypocrisy? – these are the things which disgust men of the shams in what men call the Christian religion and turn men from Him who knew no distinction and who shed His life blood for all⁵⁹.”

⁵⁸ A. J. Tomlinson *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson* White Wing Publishing House Cleveland TN, 2012 P.190

⁵⁹ Michael S. Swann *The Holy Jumpers: A Concise History of the Church of God of Prophecy in the Bahamas [1909-1974]* Xulon Press Maitland, Florida 2018, P. 18

From this event we discover the transference of the same expression of ethics that promotes one thing but practices another. Decades later this ethical paradigm persists in the corporate Pentecostal church as an example is noted in an interview of Bahamians Bishop Brice H. Thompson, General Presbyterian Emeritus of The Church of God of Prophecy and Mrs. Advira Thompson. They tell of their attendance to the General Assembly of the Church of God of Prophecy in Tennessee during the 1950's where at the venue was a black hand that pointed to the water fountain and a white hand that pointed to another water fountain indicating Caucasians were to use the white fountain and blacks were to use the black fountain. The same applied to the restrooms. They noted that the message of Pentecostalism appeared to be in conflict with the messengers of the same as this practice was not in line with the message of loving one's neighbour as oneself as promoted by the biblical text⁶⁰. Accordingly, these examples show an entrenched pattern of ethics that would inevitably influence the way in which ethics is practiced in the Bahamas.

The examination of the origins of Pentecostalism along with its progression to the Bahamas demonstrate the dichotomous ethical approach to life that invariably impacts how the message is delivered to the islands of the Bahamas. More importantly it mirrors how the message is actualized among Pentecostals in the Bahamas in that there are the stated ideals of ethics juxtaposed with what is actually practiced. Accordingly, my research project will examine the available church documents of participants within the sample that may include historical information

⁶⁰ Interview with Bishop Brice H. Thompson and Mrs. Advira Thompson Nassau, Bahamas 4 February 2018.

pertaining to the use of the Bible in doctrinal, teaching and preaching events. This information would establish a baseline of comparison to current findings.

2.2 Quantitative Research

Due to these particular historical ethical challenges, the methodology employed to examine how the current Bahamian Pentecostal population come up with an ethically defensible position that is biblically informed is best served by surveying in the form of questionnaires that allow individuals to state their beliefs and opinions in a tangible form. This format permits the researcher to pin down particular perspectives and ideas and quantify these responses from the research pool.

I will begin by looking at distinctive aspects of Pentecostalism and establish a backdrop from which my enquiry will take place. Of necessity, I will look at the importance of ethics to a Christian life.

Initial investigations reveal limited resources relative to the Bahamas, so I will extrapolate based on ties to global organizations that have congregations in the Bahamas. It would seem that Pentecostals in general tend to be concerned with the way their lives are expressed in that it demonstrates the level of commitment and dedication to the tenets of the faith. The very public nature of their religious expression through worship, ethics and conversation is translated into a perceived need for consistency of lifestyle to that public witness. In addition, the private lifestyle is also expected to be congruent with the expressed spiritual status as a Pentecostal Christian.

The approach to the methodology or the underlying theory for the way this research will be done is derived from the most suited methods or techniques for arriving at the objectives of this thesis: The aim of this research project is to answer the question, How do Pentecostals engage with the Bible when deciding their position on any given ethical issue? Historically it is often been assumed that there is a close connection to the Bible in Pentecostal praxis. For example, French Arrington writes, “The starting point and very foundation for Pentecostal faith and praxis has been the biblical text. The real issue in Pentecostalism has become hermeneutics, that is, the distinctive nature and function of Scripture and the roles of the Holy Spirit, the Christian community, grammatical-historical research, and personal experience in the interpretive process.”⁶¹

In this observation, Arrington supports the connection of the Bible to Pentecostalism by describing the Bible as foundational to both faith and practice. He is so convinced of the inextricable connection between the two that he quickly moves to pointing towards interpretation as the battleground for Pentecostalism without any further comment on this point. He draws our attention to areas of significant influence that by themselves are insufficient to provide a complete definition of how Pentecostals use the Bible, but collectively place one on the defining road that must be traveled by anyone attempting to review Pentecostal hermeneutics. I feel however that the strong statement made by Arrington indicating that ‘the Bible is foundational to both faith and praxis’ requires more

⁶¹ French Arrington, *Pneuma: The Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies* The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals [Vol 16 Spring 1994]101-107

exploration. Additional research needs to consider as to how the Bible came to be so closely associated to Pentecostal tenets and practice and, for that matter, whether this assumed connection is actually as strong as it might be thought, since Arrington's statement includes a vast area of assumption of how the scriptural text is engaged by Pentecostals. This assumption may include the following questions: Is the Bible one of several sources for guidance for living and for doctrine, or the only authority? Are the doctrinal statements of faith found in Pentecostalism drawn from the Bible? Do Pentecostal statements of faith agree with actual practice? Is the scriptural text open for debate in its meaning and application? Are the aspirational goals established by the Bible actually attainable?

The unsupported assumption of biblical priority often becomes a motivating source for interpretive discussions, which may lead the conversation to perhaps unverifiable ends. The use of the Bible today will be evaluated through a series of surveys of leaders and their congregations to understand their views and rationale for deciding a particular position on ethical issues. Attitudes will be compared through a measured response of 'agree strongly,' 'agree,' 'uncertain,' 'disagree,' or 'strongly disagree.' These measured responses will be assessed among three categories: Gender, age groups and Pentecostal denomination through questions related to the way they would draw upon the Bible to formulate, support or retreat from the church's ethical practice and teachings as it relates to controversial topics facing the Bahamian church in general.

In terms of enlisting participants, the first level of recruitment is with the churches themselves. There is a process of negotiation with church leaders to be granted permission to undertake research in the first place. An initial letter of approach is forwarded to potential participating churches, which will be followed up by personal communication using telephone and email. Once permission has been granted, the church will be asked to put a statement in the church notices alerting attendees to the presence of a researcher and the possibility that they might be approached for a conversation. These recruitment letters given to the participating churches explain the purpose of the research project as well as information on the process of the research and requirements for participation. With regard to requirements for participation, valid consent was necessary. It was obtained from: (1) church leaders via a signed statement of permission; (2) all formal interviewees, including group interviewees via a signed consent form; (3) informal interviewees via either a tape recorded statement of consent or a signed consent form (depending on the context of the informal interview setting); and (4) questionnaire respondents on the basis of their completion of the questionnaire. If someone is not competent to give personal consent they will not be included in the study unless at the general congregational level. See appendix for recruitment letters and consent.

The questionnaire used in this research was designed to be clear and straightforward in terms of language, concepts and manageable tasks as

recommended by Converse and Presser.⁶² The questionnaire begins with demographic questions to separate the categories of comparison i.e. gender, age group and Pentecostal denomination. This initial segment of questions is followed by five sections containing questions dealing with particular parameters relative to this study. These parameters include: 'sources of ethics,' 'who is affected by ethics,' 'opinion about gambling,' 'opinion about same-sex marriage,' and 'opinion about the environment.' See appendix for questionnaire used in survey.

Participants in this research at all levels will be informed of their right to withdraw from participation in the project at any point during the project. All consent forms will contain a statement to this effect. It will also contain information about how they should communicate their desire to withdraw and to whom. Should this occur, there will be no consequences for a church or individual who decides to withdraw from participation in this project. This message will be communicated to church leaders and congregants during the process of negotiating access to these communities. Once an individual or church has withdrawn from the project no material from their contribution will be used in the project. Where possible, it will be deleted immediately, but where it is embedded in material with participants, it will be retained but not used.

2.3 Qualitative Research

This method of research is primarily exploratory in nature and is designed to achieve a better understanding of the reasons behind the opinions and responses

⁶² Jean Converse and Stanley Presser "Survey Questions: Handcrafting the standardized Questionnaire" Sage Publications Thousand Oaks 1986 P. 10

given in the quantitative survey portion of the research. Focus groups will be employed in this regard to broaden the descriptive and interpretive aspects of the data drawn from the surveys. These focus groups will allow trends of thought and emerging ideas about the topics under review to come to the surface. This when combined with the other research methods used in this project will provide a more comprehensive picture of the ethical make up of Pentecostals in the Bahamas. Focus groups were included as part of the qualitative research process to provide opportunities for supplementary support as well as a more in-depth investigation and comprehensive analysis of the data derived from the primary source of the quantitative survey. The strength of the focus group tool is the interactive aspect of the group that produces information and insights that we would otherwise not have access to; in addition, the ability for the researcher to dig deeper into data on the specific subject area of interest. Historically, focus groups have been used in social science studies since the mid 1900's, with one early usage scenario for example being evaluating the effectiveness of World War II propaganda programs, and audience response to radio broadcasts.⁶³ Robert Merton, considered one of the progenitors of the focus group interview indicates that the advantage of this method includes a release of inhibitions of the participants allowing data to be discovered that would otherwise not come to the surface.⁶⁴ In terms of this study, the focus group vehicle is expected to provide clarity on the ethical sources participants actually draw from and compare to the ethical positions they declare in response to

⁶³ David L. Morgan Focus Groups as Qualitative Research 2nd Ed. Sage Publications Thousand Oaks, 1997 P 4-5

⁶⁴ Robert K Merton, The Focused Interview 2nd Ed. The Free Press, New York, 1990 p146-147

formal questioning. The investigation of this nuance between statement and practice would be valuable in understanding Bahamian Pentecostal practice and perhaps provide a means of comparison to other Pentecostal genres in other parts of the world. Bruce Shearer writes, "Focus group research has been one of the principal tools used by private sector firms to evaluate markets and develop and test product introduction and promotional activities. Developed as an applied research method by social scientists working in private market research companies and in the marketing research divisions of large corporations and commercial advertising agencies, focus groups are widely used to obtain information about consumer attitudes and behavior."⁶⁵ When posited in the realm of theological research, the tools of focus group expression allow a broader observation of participants attitudes and behavior which when coupled with a quantitative survey method can provide key support in corroborating conclusions drawn from the survey method.

Bahamian Pentecostals were invited to participate in three focus groups to allow a broader expression of opinions and views derived from the questionnaire survey. Participants were made up of representatives from each of the three denominations and nine churches surveyed. Each focus group was limited to the particular denomination in order to allow comparison among the organizations and individuals from each of the surveyed churches within the denomination were

⁶⁵ Schearer, S. Bruce. "The Value of Focus Group Research for Social Action Programs." *Studies in Family Planning* 12, no. 12 (1981): 407-08. doi:10.2307/1965653.

represented in the focus group. The attempt was made to have as equal as possible gender representation among the attendees. The pastor of each church was deliberately excluded from the focus groups in order to eliminate the authoritative presence that may influence the direction of the dialogue; this allows a freer discussion and potentially more authentic responses by congregants.

Each focus group participant was given a written overview of the purpose of the activity and a consent form to read and sign before the session could begin. An opportunity for questions prior to beginning was given to ensure each participant was comfortable with the process. Permission was asked and granted for me to take written notes and to have the discussion digitally recorded to ensure accurate recording of responses and to minimize disruptions to thought patterns by having participants constantly repeat their contributions for the purposes of writing.

During this preliminary section participants were reminded of their anonymity in the exercise and that they would instead be referred to by a code known only to the researcher in the thesis. They were further advised that the digitally recorded session would be erased after transcribing the data in order to preserve their identity via voice recognition. Refreshments were provided including sandwiches, pastries, juices and water, which they were welcome to enjoy at any time during the exercise. This was done because most of the participants came right after work and may have been in need of an energy boost to minimize physiological distractions. General rules of the exercise regarding courtesies extended to fellow participants were outlined. They included allowing one person to speak at a time so that each person's view would be respected regardless of opinion. This also facilitated easier

note taking. Each session was designed to last approximately one hour and fifteen minutes in order to maintain focus and minimize waning attention spans.

The general approach adopted was that I presented some key summary findings from the quantitative study, offered my interpretation of the data and asked for the group's feedback on both the findings and my conclusions.

3. What is Pentecostalism? What is Pentecostal Ethics?

3.1 Origins of Pentecostalism

What is termed Pentecostalism today can be linked to the notable events of 1906 to 1909 taking place at 312 Azusa Street Los Angeles California. According to Vinson Synan, Pivotal figures include 3 individuals who played a significant role in the events that took place during the 3-year revival: Charles Parham, William Seymour and Frank Bartleman. Parham ran a Bible school in Topeka Kansas where one of his students Agnes Ozman on 1 January, 1901 experienced what is termed the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and began to speak “in tongues.” J. Roswell flower writes that she requested hands to be laid on her to receive the Holy Ghost according to the pattern described in the book of Acts.⁶⁶ This, according to Vinson Synan came about through intense study of the Bible concerning the evidence of receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Consequently Parham developed the doctrine that glossolalia [speaking in tongues] was the biblical evidence of having received the Holy Spirit. As Parham moved locations to Houston he was joined by William Seymour who accepted his teachings on glossolalia along with the previously established doctrinal points of divine healing, Justification by faith, sanctification as a definite work of grace and the premillennial rapture of the saints at the second coming of Christ. With William Seymour receiving an invitation to Los Angeles to preach he became the central

⁶⁶ J. Roswell Flower, *The Genesis of the Pentecostal Movement*, Enrichment Journal Springfield Missouri, 1999

figure of the Azusa Street happenings by being the main preacher as recorded by journalist Frank Bartleman.⁶⁷ This revival became the crucible which formed an explosive expansion around the world. Pilgrims who visited the Azusa street revival took back to their respective countries the Pentecostal experience. As far as the Bahamas is concerned, its brand of Pentecostalism is notably tethered to this American experience.

⁶⁷ Frank Bartleman, *Asuza Street An eyewitness Account* Gainesville Florida Bridge-Logos, 1980

3.2 Origins of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas

The entrance of the Pentecostal 'fire' into the archipelagic colony of the Bahamas would appear to have come through the exposure of a Bahamian and a mission minded American to this new spiritual experience that was sweeping parts of the United States. A connected pathway can be traced from the spiritual dynamo of the Azusa Street Mission in California to the crucible of the Pleasant Grove revival in Durant Florida where Bahamian, Edmund S. Barr and American, R. M. Evans rode the mission wave to the islands of the Bahamas, bringing with them the Pentecostal message. Christopher Moree writes,

"G.B. Cashwell, a minister of the Holiness Association of North Carolina, went to Los Angeles in 1906, received the Pentecostal baptism, and returned to his home in Dunn, North Carolina...A year after Cashwell's return to the southeast, in January of 1908, he preached in Cleveland Tennessee at the conclusion of the General Assembly of the Church of God. A. J. Tomlinson at the time pastor of the church in Cleveland, received the Pentecostal Baptism. In May 1909, A. J. Tomlinson, now infused with the power of the Holy Spirit, conducted a revival at the Pleasant Grove campground in Durant Florida."⁶⁸

It was at this campground revival in Durant Florida that Moree goes on to describe how retired Methodist minister R. M. Evans receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit and resigns his position as a Methodist minister relinquishing his pension and is subsequently ordained as a minister in the Church of God. Bahamian Edmund Barr

⁶⁸ Christopher Moree "Pentecostalism in the Bahamas" *History and Heritage* [Church of God Summer/Fall 1999], 1-11

experiences a similar spiritual outpouring in his life at this same Pleasant Grove revival under the preaching of A. J. Tomlinson. Barr, Evans and Tomlinson's paths intersect at this campground revival in a way that blossomed into the expansion of the Pentecostal movement with a common call to evangelize the Bahamian Islands.⁶⁹ It should be noted that at this time there was a significant population of Bahamian immigrants living in Florida. According to David Michel, "From 1900 to 1930 between 80,000 and 90,000 British West Indians entered the United States. Among them 3,000 Bahamians settled in Florida. By 1920, 5,000 Bahamians formed 52 percent of the colored population in Miami."⁷⁰

Edmund Barr and his wife Rebecca were most likely the first Bahamians to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit and it is interesting that they were also the first to return to the Bahamas with such a testimony. It should be noted that Rebecca was born an American as evidenced by their marriage certificate.⁷¹ According to Moree they returned home in November 1909 to begin sharing that testimony of baptism in the Holy Spirit as part of the Gospel message to their fellow Bahamians.⁷² The first Pentecostal missionaries would appear to be R.M. Evans and his wife Ida V. Evans along with foster son Robert S. Mooreland and Carl Padgett who left by boat on New Year's Eve 1909 from Florida heading into Nassau Bahamas. Upon arrival they met up with the Barrs and subsequently began ministry

⁶⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁰ David Michel "The Importance of Florida for the Early Pentecostal Movement" [Chicago Theological Seminary <http://www.fch.fiu.edu/FCH-2005/Michel> accessed 4 February 2014]

⁷¹ Michael Swann, interview by author, Nassau, Bahamas February 2, 2015

⁷² *ibid*

to primarily the black Bahamians.⁷³ According to Charles Conn, they stepped upon the Bahamian shore on 4 January 1910 as the first Church of God missionaries to land on foreign soil.⁷⁴ However, with Rebecca Barr being an American, she was the first Church of God missionary to land on foreign soil and her husband Edmund Barr was the first Church of God missionary to his own homeland. It can be said then that Edmund and Rebecca Barr were the first Pentecostal missionaries to the Bahamas.

This particular notion that the initial ministry of R.M. Evans and team was to the black Bahamians seems to suggest several things: That Edmund and Rebecca Barr perhaps had already begun to make evangelistic inroads with their fellow black Bahamians thus it was easier to walk through a path that had already been cleared. That since the message was coming from indigenous blacks it was perhaps not considered as valid to the foreign whites, due to the prevalent racial divides that existed at that time. Howard Johnson sheds some light on the Bahamian society at that time in his writing on the Friendly Societies in the Bahamas between 1834-1910. "Partiality was being shown towards elite whites in the administration of justice and the discrimination against coloured men in the colony's civil service... coloured men, however intelligent or trustworthy were rarely appointed to the Comissioner of Peace although the coloured population formed more than three quarters of the entire community."⁷⁵ From this we can gather the general mood of

⁷³ Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard Van Der Maas *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* [Zondervan 2003], 29-30

⁷⁴ Charles Conn *Where the Saints have Trod* [Pathway Press 1959], 50-52

⁷⁵ Howard Johnson "Friendly societies in the Bahamas 1834–1910," *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, 12:3, [1991], 183-199

the Bahamas with regard to race relations. Although these were post-abolition times there still existed support for segregationist practices.

Perhaps Mr. and Mrs. Barr were of a lower social economic status and thus could not gain access to the more affluent Bahamian whites. I suggest this possibility due to the fact that they were residing in the state of Florida and the predominant reason for such migration tended to be economically related. Howard Johnson writes that there were two main waves of labour migration from the Bahamas to Florida. The first was to the Key West area from the 1870's to the early 1900's. And the second was from 1905-1924 to the Miami area due to poor economic conditions in the Bahamas. In particular the decline of the pineapple, and sisal industries along with an increasing dissatisfaction with the sponging industry, forced a search for employment to south Florida.⁷⁶

Perhaps there was a resistance to the Pentecostal message as a whole from the Bahamian whites since Evans, his wife Ida, Robert Mooreland and Carl Padgett were all white and should have been able to circumvent the existing racial bias.

Interestingly today, this slant towards the Bahamian blacks still exists in that the vast majority of Pentecostals in the Bahamas are black. Before too much is read into this, it should be noted that the Bahamas is a predominantly African influenced country, racially speaking. Howard Johnson writes, "A significant proportion of liberated Africans landed in the Bahamas... In the early nineteenth century the

⁷⁶ Howard Johnson "Bahamian Labor Migration to Florida in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries" *International Migration Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring, 1988), 84-103

bights of Benin and Biafra were important areas of supply for the transatlantic slave trade.”⁷⁷ Cleveland Eneas writes, “...The Yorubas, a proud African tribe, populated Bain Town area in the nineteenth century.” These notations support the Africanized impact of slavery on the ethnic make-up of the Bahamas. This does not mean that the fairer skinned Bahamians of European descent did not respond to the Pentecostal message. On the contrary we learn from A. J. Tomlinson that both races turned up at the numerous tent meetings held by the missionaries. He writes, “We arrived in Nassau Thursday February 16 A.M. [1911] Brother Evans met us at the landing. We had but little trouble getting through the custom house except we had to pay one pound as duty on the tent. Had a street meeting the same night and every night since. Some at altar tonight...Blacks and whites all come to meeting together.”⁷⁸

This particular occurrence of both blacks and whites showing up at the street services bears familiarity to the Azusa Street revival meetings where Frank Bartleman writes, “The color line was washed away in the blood.”⁷⁹ This notation can be considered the ideal way in which Pentecostalism would like to move forward. However, what is glaringly consistent with this occurrence is the two-tiered expression of ethics in that there is an apparent show of the ideal thing that should be done but the second tier of attitudes and practice fall short of the standard of the first. A letter to the local Newspaper in Nassau 23 February, 1911

⁷⁷ Howard Johnson “Friendly societies in the Bahamas 1834–1910,” *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, 12:3, [1991], 183-199

⁷⁸ A. J. Tomlinson *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1924* [White Wing Publishing House 2012], 160

⁷⁹ Frank Bartleman *Azusa Street An Eyewitness Account* [Bridge-Logos 1980], 61

expressing outrage of the attempted separating of the races at the revival meeting is a vivid demonstration of this second ethical tier.

...Now Sir, the Bahamas are not Florida, Georgia or Tennessee, and we have no place for such discrimination in this community, for it is calculated to breed trouble. These preaching people had better return from whence they came, we have no need for their preaching on those terms. This is a British colony and not American soil, coloured people are citizens here and have equal rights with white people, which every man is bound to respect. The Sponge Shed is a public place and no person preaching or otherwise has the right to prescribe the right of place to another. Go back preaching woman to your own land where you have the right to prescribe coloured peoples movements and preach to your heart's content your coloured and white doctrine and your divided heaven, it is not wanted here. Go Back!⁸⁰

The peculiarity of this new religious experience was antagonistic to the orthodoxy of the existing denominations within the Bahamas. As a result, it drew ridicule and disdain to the point of persecution. The steadfast testimony of the power of God to heal and deliver however could not be shaken. After tracking down the great grandson of the likely first Pentecostal convert in the Bahamas, Arabella Eneas, I was able to access the only family copy of the book "Let the Church Roll On" written by Cleveland W. Eneas the son of Arabella, who gives an account of his mother and subsequently his father's conversion. He writes, "In 1910 she was not well and she sat in her little house on Meadows street tending her illness and her two year old daughter Eugenie....On the corner near her house were some people preaching a somewhat new doctrine with an emphasis on the reality of Jesus Christ in the everyday living of people. She listened and was touched. After the service she sent

⁸⁰ Michael S. Swann *The Holy Jumpers: A Concise History of the Church of God of Prophecy in the Bahamas [1909-1974]* Xulon Press Maitland, Florida 2018, P. 18

for these people to come into her house. They prayed for her; they laid hands on her and she was healed. Not only her body was healed, but she the organist at Bethel Baptist Church saw a new light and was determined to follow it and her Christ....She was saved sanctified and received the blessing of the Holy Ghost and never wavered.”⁸¹

Arabella Eneas’ dramatic witness of healing and acceptance of the Pentecostal message, led her husband, W.V Eneas, to accept the Lord likewise. He later became the first black Bishop of the Church of God in the Bahamas.⁸² This, however, was not as easy undertaking. The Eneas family was a prominent one and was known to have means but the courageous step of accepting the Pentecostal badge made them the focus of much untoward attention. Christopher Moree writes, “Like many other converts to Pentecostalism, the Eneas family exhibited profound courage. They were willing to leave established and comfortable churches, to lose long-standing friendships, to be estranged from close family members and to suffer the reproach of society all for a new experience preached to them by strangers from a foreign country...The Eneas Family paid a large financial price for allegiance to this new faith.”⁸³ According to this account, it would appear that the Eneas family on both a social level as well as in the economic arena experienced a significant level of

⁸¹ Cleveland W. Eneas *Let The Church Roll On* [Cleveland and Muriel Eneas P. O. Box 1257 Superior Printing Services Nassau, Bahamas 1976] The significance of this source from Cleveland W Eneas is found in the fact that his book was written for local consumption only in 1976. Now deceased, his book was never cataloged with ISBN, International Standard Book Number system so it is quickly fading into extinction. Even the children of the author could not locate a copy. Fortunately, the grandson Cleveland Eneas III in digging through family relics came across the book and is making efforts to preserve its future. He graciously permitted me a few hours to review the book for which I am grateful.

⁸² Christopher Moree “Pentecostalism in the Bahamas” *History and Heritage* [Church of God Summer/Fall 1999], 1-11

⁸³ Christopher Moree “Pentecostalism in the Bahamas” *History and Heritage* [Church of God Summer/Fall 1999], 1-11

ostracism. One could easily speculate that perhaps they were involved in some sort of family business such that a financial boycott of their entrepreneurial entities could be so immediately affected. It further demonstrates the depth of their conviction in that they would voluntarily subject themselves to such severe social shunning and potential economic hardship. What is somewhat surprising is the inclusion of close family members among the scoffers. Was this Spiritual experience so leprous that one's kin found it necessary to distance themselves from their potentially contagious testimony? Or was it simply a matter of embarrassment at work. Maybe this priority given to opposing opinion generated an issue of economic survival for the family business; they did not want to upset the customers and incur the withdrawal of their patronage.

Again, this discussion is speculative, however it is not too difficult to imagine the nuances of such a situation where any rational individual would be doing all that they can to salvage a divisive issue. The persecution the Eneas family experienced escalated to the point where two of the homes belonging to W. V. and Arabella were burned to the ground.⁸⁴ With all of this negative experience of the Eneas family, those fires that were intended to demoralize, dissuade and destroy became symbolic of the spread of the Pentecostal gospel in the Bahamas. It should be noted that the son of W. V. and Arabella went on to become a prominent dentist and author, Cleveland W. Eneas and his son Cleveland Eneas Jr. also followed in the field of

⁸⁴ *ibid*

dentistry. This indicates that the family was able to rise from the attempted economic pressures as a result of their Pentecostal roots.

The mission continued with A. J. Tomlinson himself spear-heading a team to the Bahamas in February 1911. The connection with R. M. Evans' ministry work already underway catapulted the overall evangelistic thrust. What is intriguing is why would A. J. Tomlinson the head of the Church of God lead a mission trip to a sparsely populated island colony of the Bahamas when R. M. Evans was already there conducting mission work along with Edmund Barr and his wife Rebecca. Apparently a moving letter written by Evans stirred the church members attending the Assembly in Cleveland Tennessee to give a significant offering towards his mission efforts. Perhaps A. J. Tomlinson was similarly moved that he decided to go to the Bahamas himself to see and experience God at work on the mission field. The minutes of the sixth annual Assembly of the churches of God describes the atmosphere created when a letter from R. M. Evans was read on 7 January 1911. "A special prayer was offered for them...and amid tears and groans one after another came forward and laid their offerings on the Bible till finally it was counted and found to amount to \$21.05"⁸⁵ A. J. Tomlinson writes of a sustained effort of street services held in several different locations almost simultaneously around the island and then it appears that at night they would have large evangelistic services under the tent. He writes, "Held eight services by dividing out some...We pitched our tent

⁸⁵ Church of God General Assembly Minutes 1906-1914 [White-Wing Publishing House 1992], 107

in a beautiful place on the sea shore and have commenced the meetings. Holding meetings at other places in town every night. Large crowds on streets and at tent.”⁸⁶

It would seem that there was a distinct plan or method to the mission that I would describe as ‘Shake-up, Show-up and Preach-up’. The team would be divided into smaller groups that would set up locations around the island that tended to have high pedestrian traffic. A. J. Tomlinson identifies several key places where their street meetings were held; the open-air market, the Sponge Exchange, the market shed, and in town. Having services all over and in strategic places in effect shook-up the Island as the word would get out that something was happening on the streets of Nassau. Tomlinson would also use music as a means of attracting the attention of passersby and create an entertaining vehicle that encouraged large crowds to show up for the nightly tent meetings. “Have been marching down the street beating the drum, then beating lightly at the street services while the organ was played and during the singing. Then after the close of the street service would march to the tent and beat the drum and collect the crowd.”⁸⁷

This model of ministry can still be found in some form in the evangelistic methods of Pentecostalism today. In particular, we can still see today the ‘Show-up’ aspect where musical bands become an integral part of the overall effort. For example, in the Church of God of Prophecy in the Bahamas, there is an Annual Baptismal Parade that has become part of the local culture in that it has been going on for a century. It

⁸⁶ A. J. Tomlinson *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1924* [White Wing Publishing House 2012], 160

⁸⁷ A. J. Tomlinson *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1924* [White Wing Publishing House 2012], 160-161

is used to generate crowds to show up at services that witness the Gospel by showing up the entertaining vehicle of a marching band. Firstly, they parade to the Western Esplanade for the baptismal service where candidates who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour present themselves for water baptism as a sign of their new life in Christ. Secondly, the parade serves as an invitation for the public to attend the Annual National Convention 'Preach-up' to hear the Word of God expounded. There has been a decline over the years in the 'Shake-up' part of the model in that street meetings appear to be on the decline as modern church edifices have been constructed with comfortable padded pews and air-conditioned venues. The result of this model of ministry is noted by Tomlinson as he writes, "I preached at tent last night to a large congregation probably not less than a thousand people."⁸⁸ His March 14th entry says, "Sunday night was quite a service. It was thought I preached to more than 2,000 people. Big crowd last night too. Two received the baptism yesterday. Power on some at the altar last night and Sunday night also. Some times the large crowds are hard to handle. I have to stand where I can look over the entire congregation besides preaching for an hour."⁸⁹ It would seem that they were able to make a significant impact on the people in Nassau despite the strong opposition to Pentecostalism.

The resistance did not discourage the efforts of the missionaries because they expanded their efforts to move out into the outer islands of the Bahamas. On March 17, 1911, a team of nine persons headed by A. J. Tomlinson including T.W. Buckalew,

⁸⁸ *ibid*

⁸⁹ *ibid*

B. Prom, Roy Miller, C. M. Padgett, E Haynes, Mrs. Haynes, Lulu Williams and Flora E. Bower set sail for Ragged Island, stopping first in Farmer's Cay. The team formed the Brass Band that would provide music and marketing value to the mission efforts. Even with smaller populations on Ragged Island they still met up with resistance from the established churches. There was a Baptist chapel, a Church of England House and a Plymouth Brethren Hall on the Island. Tomlinson notes, "The first night after I preached, three of the Plymouth brethren withstood me sharply and accused me of preaching damnable doctrine, but I gave them rope until I saw them hang themselves beautifully and we had prayer and closed the service with victory in spite of the trial on their part for controversy."⁹⁰

The reception on the other islands seemed more favourable as they moved to Long Island. They went to Clarence Town, Deadman's Cay, Simms and Salt Pond taking the brass bands music with them as the 'Show-up' vehicle. April 7th Tomlinson writes, "We are still practicing with our instruments and learning to march, form a circle and commence playing, so we can commence a street meeting in that way."⁹¹ Then on April 11th he writes, "About seven o'clock we went out on a hill and rock pile and began to play our band and soon I had about 150 people to preach to."⁹² Then on April 12th He writes, "Had a long band practice and afternoon we took our instruments and marched about three miles to a shade in the road and we played

⁹⁰ A. J. Tomlinson *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1924* [White Wing Publishing House 2012], 164

⁹¹ *ibid*, 169

⁹² *ibid*, 170

and sang till a congregation gathered and we gave them the gospel and tracts.”⁹³ It seems evident that Pentecostalism and music go hand in hand and forms an integral part of their worship experience.

Looking at the beginning of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas it appears to be no mistake Pentecostalism is practiced the way it is currently because of the historical impact of the way it was initially done. The close integration of music into the DNA of the worship and outreach efforts of this religious genre seems inextricable. To take away the musical aspect of the Pentecostals religious expression would be to take a fish out of water; it would surely die. More specifically, in the context of the Bahamian culture, to take away the bands would be like wholesale identity theft of a religious culture. A significant part of who Pentecostals are and how they are perceived is tied up in the use of music and in particular, brass bands. The lyrics of the melodies played have taken on an ethical role through informing and reminding them of their belief systems.

Another major prong to the identity of Pentecostals in the Bahamas is linked poignantly to the Bible. Cleveland W. Eneas in describing the new Pentecostal religion that had burst onto the Bahamian landscape says it was predicated on living, “as the early saints lived, and tread the path that they trod.”⁹⁴ To accomplish this meant that a close examination of the Bible that detailed such a lifestyle was to

⁹³ *ibid*, 170

⁹⁴ Cleveland W. Eneas *Let The Church Roll On* [Cleveland and Muriel Eneas P. O. Box 1257 Superior Printing Services Nassau, Bahamas]

be undertaken and reinforced on a regular basis. Eneas continues, “They interpreted the Bible, and especially the New Testament literally. They began to understand the acceptance of the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour. This acceptance compelled them to change their ways of living; they put off ‘the old man’ and accepted Jesus’ admonition to Nicodemus: You must be born again. They tried to put away all worldly things. Those who smoked, ceased; alcoholic beverages of any sort became taboo; gambling, dancing, playing of cards, frivolity of any kind, and anything that was considered as enjoyment of life, that did not have a religious or moral basis, was cut off. Only that which led to a closer contact with religious life was left.”⁹⁵

This description by Cleveland Eneas represents the ethical imprint of Pentecostalism in the Bahamian context with regard to its approach to a Biblical lifestyle. These restrictive practices were reinforced among the adherents and became distinctive features of what was considered the ideal body of ethics for Pentecostals. I would disagree with this ethic of outward holiness that borders on bondage and even brainwashing as the ideal and suggest that perhaps this eccentricity of religious practice could possibly be part of the reason of the development of a two-tiered ethic because it would take much commitment and dedication to uphold these recommended practices that could not be supported by the scriptures. Accordingly, the Pentecostal church posed a potentially great challenge to doctrine of the Bible in terms of misrepresentation of what holiness is. This area will be examined in depth in the quantitative study survey. The Bible had

⁹⁵ ibid

taken on a new role in the lives of these Pentecostal converts. Eneas alludes to the fact that many of the converts came out of the Methodist and Baptist traditions and were professing Christianity so the Bible was not a foreign entity. But it would appear that Bible took on a new role, a new place of sacredness in the individual's daily life. The attempt is to literally embody or mimic the relationship that the biblical characters had with Christ. So a close reproduction of the moral practices was seen as a closer walk with God. This perhaps forms the crux of the reasoning behind the literal interpretation of the Bible. It was not an attempt to be academically prudent, but an effort to get as close to God so God could get close to them in their everyday life.

This description of the Bahamian Pentecostal lifestyle by Eneas is the pulse of the Pentecostal ethical construct that came about through an attempt to adhere to the Bible as closely as possible. It represented a view that the Bible was the singular source of ethical aspiration and as such any thing that appeared to detract from this journey was not suitable for the Pentecostal. One can imagine the general resistance then to allowing academic disciplines to assist in the interpretation and understanding of the scriptural context because this would create a separation, a distancing from modeling the early saints and thus effectively moving away from God in their eyes. Accordingly, educational pursuits including seminary training would be shunned. This shunning of academia in terms of understanding the Bible and the Pentecostal tradition as a whole is perhaps one of the unfortunate attitudes that has affected the direction and reflection of ethics within the diaspora. Simon

Chan writes, “ The Pentecostal reality has not been communicated in all its fullness to a subsequent generation. When it was explained it came through as rather impoverished theological constructs.”⁹⁶ I agree with this observation that there were challenges to the articulation of what was being transferred in terms of identity, theological practice and ethical distinctives however, I disagree with the idea that this shortcoming prevents the progression of Pentecostalism as a community of individuals on a journey to connect with and God. The overarching desire to get as close to God has caused a search that now includes the tools of academia as more is being written about Pentecostalism than in previous decades. William Kay writes, “What is extraordinary about Pentecostalism in its present existence is that it has encircled the globe. Largely unseen by academic commentators and historians, it managed to survive...”⁹⁷

Cleveland Eneas continues, “They were required to ‘get saved’; proclaiming a belief in Jesus Christ was not enough. One had to ‘tarry’ for long hours at the bench to be ‘saved’. More tarrying brought on sanctification, and after one was sanctified to the truth, by constant praying and seeking, he received the ‘Holy Ghost’ and began to speak in other tongues as “the spirit gave utterance.” For a few this might have been a sham, but for most of the Church of God people in the early days, this was serious business. They believed; they received the Holy Ghost; they practiced divine healing and the “laying on of hands” and anointing with oil. They believed in baptism by

⁹⁶ Simon Chan *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* Wipf and Stock Eugene, 2011

⁹⁷ William Kay *Pentecostalism: A very short introduction* Oxford University Press Oxford, 2011

immersion; they ate the Lord's Supper and drank his blood in grape juice. They wore no jewelry, no adornments, no neckties; they tried to live a pure and sinless life."⁹⁸

These particular Pentecostal ethical practices noted by Eneas represents a description of what existed at the time and shows the underlying two-tiered evolution of ethics as practiced by Bahamian Pentecostals. This pattern seems to overlap with theological practice as well. Reflecting on the description of the Pentecostals theological practice we can detect an unwitting creation of grades of the conversion experience. If proclaiming a belief in Christ was not enough but rather one had to be saved through tarrying for hours at the altar, it has the potential to develop a particularistic mindset that is not supported by the scriptures. The phrase, "one needs to be saved good" is still heard in Pentecostal circles today within the Bahamas and this would be a direct allusion to this grading of the conversion experience; that one can simply believe but not be fully 'saved' or converted. It is interesting that the attempt to draw as close as possible to God by adhering as close as possible to the Bible has the potential to do the opposite if that approach is not supported by the Bible.

Up to this point, the Church of God was the singular vehicle for the establishment of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas maintained by United States leadership. It would not be until 1924 after a split took place, that the first indigenous overseer, Bishop Stanley Ferguson would take office and initiate Native leadership under the heading

⁹⁸ Cleveland W. Eneas *Let The Church Roll On* [Cleveland and Muriel Eneas P. O. Box 1257 Superior Printing Services Nassau, Bahamas], 5

of Church of God of Prophecy. The Church of God also continues with their own leadership as of the 1924 split. The Assemblies of God would then come on stream and establish a presence in 1928 under the leadership of S. B. Pinder. However, their main footprint was established when a congregation broke away from the Church of God during WWII. The establishment of a Bahamian Council of the Assemblies of God took place in 1955 and Earl Weech was designated superintendent. By 1956 the Assemblies of God reported having 9 churches and 356 members.⁹⁹

3.2.1 The Tomlinson Effect

A closer look at one of the key figures that shaped the way Pentecostalism in the Bahamas evolved, can be had through the Diary of A. J. Tomlinson. It gives a passionate glimpse into the experiences of a man of deep conviction. His appointment as a spiritual leader combined with his day-to-day existence as an ordinary man becomes a colorful interwoven fabric of faith and ministry. One cannot help but feel the passion which exudes from his very being with respect to all that his hands find to do in the work of 'kingdom' building.

What has impressed him to write about his everyday experiences and document the most vivid encounters of living by a set of principles that have been forged from the influences of his relationships and rearing is remarkable. The apex of his understanding of God and his duty relative to the calling comes out in brutally bold decisions and actions when faced with challenges that would rock if not bury many a man. His resolve to be, to the best of his ability and understanding, the ecclesia, the called out, the church of God takes center stage in the course he has chartered.

⁹⁹ Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard Van Der Maas *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* [Zondervan 2003], 29-30

From early on, A. J. Tomlinson demonstrated his resolve to get as close to biblical alignment as possible. He writes on March 25th 1901, “I read the words of Jesus that we received the petitions we desired because we keep his commandments. I then turned, guided by the Holy Spirit, and read where Jesus washed the disciples’ feet and said “ye ought to wash one another’s feet.” I had never obeyed this commandment. I at once laid aside my coat, girded myself with a towel, poured water in a basin and washed the feet of the brethren present.”¹⁰⁰ This episode demonstrates his willingness to adhere to biblical principles and instruction once it is revealed to him.

This diary presents a keen opportunity to capture the spirit of the leader through whom the practice of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas has been influenced in terms of ethics and hermeneutics. It provides a close-up view of the commitment to values and lifestyle practices we see in him and pinpoint the ethical framework from which he operated and construct its development to the current post-modern context. This in the hopes of bridging the generations of changing schools of thought and accepted cultural norms that find themselves antagonistic to biblical principles and the Christian faith. It is a method to evaluate the body of ethics Pentecostals in the Bahamas have inherited and understand how the current approach to ethics has come about.

His diary entries in 1902 show a propensity towards children in need and becomes a genre of ministry through which the gospel becomes reality in how Pentecostals

¹⁰⁰ Tomlinson, A. J. *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1924* White Wing Publishing House 2012, Cleveland TN p. 12

ought to respond to people in marginalized environments. He writes, “Robert Barker an orphan boy of 16 years who has been with us a few days, was admitted into our home yesterday and was gloriously converted.”¹⁰¹ On September 11 he writes, “Two bad boys persuaded our Columbus boy to run away. I could not go after him but wife, brother south and two older boys went but failed to find him.”¹⁰² The next day he writes, “I got up, started without breakfast, traced and followed him to Ducktown, recovered him and returned. Walked over thirty miles.”¹⁰³ These entries record a ministry to the orphans and their delight upon witnessing their conversion. In addition, his love for lost souls is revealed by the great efforts placed in searching for the one who strayed away. This level of concern and willing sacrifice is translated throughout his ministerial life. It speaks to a level of passion that perhaps is waning if not lost among the post-modern church. Perhaps a new look at individual personal commitment compared to his might be an advantageous reflection. This level of enthusiastic determination formed a work or ministry ethic that is readily transferable. What is notable is that these efforts and genuine concern for souls was accomplished before an official ministerial license was obtained. He started a Christian circular called Samson’s Foxes that detailed many of the ills and failings surrounding the economically deprived of that day. He writes on August 27, 1901, “How my heart yearns for the poor children back in the mountains.”¹⁰⁴ In

¹⁰¹ Ibid p. 33

¹⁰² Ibid p. 34

¹⁰³ Ibid p. 34

¹⁰⁴ Tomlinson, A. J. *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1924* White Wing Publishing House 2012, Cleveland TN p. 25

1902 he had some 620 subscribers.¹⁰⁵ It was not until June 13 1903 that he writes, “I was ordained a minister of the gospel of the Holiness Church at Camp Creek, N.

C.”¹⁰⁶

From this point on, A. J. Tomlinson seems to proliferate in preaching the gospel in an unrelenting circuit of activity. Meanwhile he has continued his publishing efforts with “The Way.” For the next several years his diary details his evangelistic efforts, encounters and success of the same with professions of faith, conversions and spiritual experiences by those in attendance. He reports on 31 December 1906, “preached 196 sermons, anointed 17 for healing, all but one got well and he resorted to medical aid. Baptized 15 and traveled about 2,646 miles.”¹⁰⁷

What glaringly stands out in his journaling is that there is a disproportionate lack of mention of his family except when it relates to spiritual experiences. This disconnect is consistent with the dual ethical pattern that finds itself within Pentecostal practice. He mentions, his wife receiving the Holy Ghost on 21 August 1908.¹⁰⁸ He mentions his son Homer in agonizing prayer and being caught away under the power and control of the Spirit.¹⁰⁹ On July 23 1909 he writes, “Iris received the baptism. This puts all my family into the experience except little Milton who is yet too young.”¹¹⁰ With regard to Milton, his birth is mentioned with the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid p. 33

¹⁰⁶ Ibid p. 35

¹⁰⁷ Ibid p. 61

¹⁰⁸ Ibid p. 89

¹⁰⁹ Ibid p. 105

¹¹⁰ Tomlinson, A. J. *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1924* White Wing Publishing House 2012, Cleveland TN p. 118

following," A son came to our house about 6 p.m. Mary wants to name him Milton."¹¹¹ There was no written expression of personal joy or mention of the pregnancy. The only indication I could pull out of his writings that his wife was pregnant is this deed he did for her approximately two weeks prior, he writes, "Did a washing today for my wife and preached a funeral sermon."¹¹²

The confirmation of the diagnosis of his priority of family came with the passing of his mother. He records how he received word that his mother was very sick and will probably not recover on 16 July 1909. He does not leave but continues his tent meetings. Then on 1 August he receives a telegram that his mother has passed away and he writes, "I wanted very much to go several days ago and wanted to go to the funeral, but on account of the meeting going on and the responsibilities here I could not get off."¹¹³ It can be noted that he preached two funerals between the time of the news of his mother's illness and her death.

This scenario is a poignant demonstration of the two-tiered ethics practiced and subsequently passed on to those Pentecostals developing through the apprenticeship of A. J. Tomlinson's era. As we examine his ethic of community with those involved in ministry along with him there is an ideal and commendable practice of providing family support to those who have been orphaned or separated from family environments; this is the first tier and ideal ethic but accompanying this

¹¹¹ Ibid p. 58

¹¹² Ibid p. 58

¹¹³ Ibid p. 119

is the second tier ethic that is practiced with his own family that fails to attain the same level of active compassion, concern and priority. Even more than this, it does not reflect the biblical precedent of the way a family ought to be prioritized. His ethical practice of family appears to be in contradiction to the Bible, though used as the principle guide for ethics.

As such a dynamic leader who developed a persona that was emulated, his example of family life and ethical approach perhaps inadvertently perpetuated or created a ministerial culture that if you put everything into the ministry, be it time or resources, your family will be automatically be saved and taken care of. As I reflect through the years of simply being a participant observer and hearing about the many faithful patriarchs of the church [Pentecostal], there seems to be from my personal perspective an inordinate amount of spiritual heroes who have adopted this ethic and has ended up with defeated families in terms of community and fellowship. It appears that the offspring of some have rejected or not bought into the way their parents practiced their religion. An individual whose father was a minister in the church says his memory of his father was always of him walking with briefcase in hand past the rest of the family seated at the breakfast table on the way out for a church activity or returning home late at the conclusion of a church related event after they were already in bed.¹¹⁴ The tone in which this information was relayed reflected a high degree of resentment and that this was a model that the interviewee would not emulate in his own family.

¹¹⁴ Interview with H1 member of Church of God of Prophecy 8, June 2014

These types of experiences would tend to change the direction and model of ethics practiced by the future generations of Pentecostals because it indicates that each generation cautiously considers the seasons and context with regard to imitation of their forefathers as it relates to the ethics they displayed and eventually the ethics the succeeding generation embraces.

The fervor of A. J. Tomlinson's conviction that was transferred to those around him is borne out repeatedly in his writings that corroborate his journaling. The tenor of his mindset and action is the apparent model that contributed to this ministry ethic that puts the church as priority ahead of everything else. He writes, "As I sit on the shore of Biscayne Bay and look out on the broad expanse of the Atlantic Ocean and think of the countries the shores which are washed by her waves; and still go beyond and trace the shores of the broad pacific, also the Indian Ocean, and remember the countries that lie around them with all their inhabitants that are to be saved only by Jesus Christ or spend eternity in hell with the damned, my heart almost fails me."¹¹⁵

This firm desire of A. J. Tomlinson to get the gospel to every living being as a priority comes out in his push to go and preach, pray and build the lives of people into an army of disciples that will work the fields that are ready for harvesting. He writes, "This is a time when everyone that can preach or conduct a prayer meeting ought to be in the field. We speak in the fear of God, from a sincere heart when we say that

¹¹⁵ A. J. Tomlinson *The Last Great Conflict* White Wing Publishing House 2011 Cleveland, TN P. 28

the world ought to be evangelized in our generation and we should not dare to thrust this responsibility on a future generation.”¹¹⁶ The question here is would the future generation reject your ethics because of the way you prioritized outreach mission above mission to one’s family? 1 Timothy 3:4-5 New International Version says concerning the role of a bishop, “He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) So the two-tiered ethical practice of prioritizing the outreach mission ahead of the in reach or family becomes a pattern for Tomlinson.

In his eighth annual address to the thirteenth Annual Assembly A. J. Tomlinson writes, “Get something done, and get it done quickly.”¹¹⁷ He was encouraged by the work that had taken place during the past year by the laborers and leaders and took the opportunity to encourage more to work with greater urgency while the opportunity presents itself. These sentiments were certainly not empty words because we have clear evidence of his personal ethics and missionary efforts. Of particular note is the outreach ministry in the Bahamas. On February 16th 1911 he arrived in Nassau Bahamas along with a delegation that represented a newly formed brass band of ten. This band becomes an effective tool in the evangelistic gathering of souls to hear the gospel. A. J. Tomlinson writes while in Nassau, “...would march

¹¹⁶ Church of God of Prophecy *General Assembly Minutes 1906-1914* White Wing Publishing House 1992, Cleveland TN p.126-127

¹¹⁷ A. J. Tomlinson *General Assembly Annual Addresses 1911-1927* White Wing Publishing House 2011, Cleveland TN p. 79

to the tent and beat the drum and collect the crowd.”¹¹⁸ Then as he moves to the outer islands of Ragged Island he writes, “The brass band rendered excellent service and a good impression was made.”¹¹⁹ Again the practice continues on Long Island, “We are still practicing with our instruments and learning to march, form a circle and commence playing, so we can commence a street meeting in that way.”¹²⁰

The impact of this band, I can only speculate, must have had an influence on the minds of the Bahamian converts to consider forming their own band that has continued the pattern of association with ministry in the efforts to spread the Pentecostal message. This Bahamian band, as a result of its involvement in the evangelistic efforts of the church, developed a connection of music to ministry that has evolved into a legacy of band music as an ethical vehicle that informs the lifestyle of the Pentecostals throughout Pentecostal history in the Bahamas. The lyrics and melodies of the songs that were played have become integrated into the ethical construct of the Pentecostal population in the Bahamas. Sean Gibson writes, “In the local communities the band serves as a connector between young and old, a bridge-builder between generations and a conduit for the transmission of sound cultural values. I continually marvel... as participants learn its disciplines and assimilate its values.”¹²¹ This observation by Gibson is an indicator of the importance of music to the Pentecostal identity and how values and disciplines are reinforced by the blending of lyrics and sounds through brass bands. I do not agree

¹¹⁸ A. J. Tomlinson *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1924* White Wing Publishing House 2012, Cleveland TN p. 160

¹¹⁹ Ibid p.164

¹²⁰ Ibid p.169

¹²¹ G. Sean Gibson *The Making of a Band: A history of the World Famous Bahamas Brass Band* AuthorHouse Bloomington, 2012

with the intimation that this was an original intention, I prefer to imagine that the band was simply an exciting and enjoyable entity that evolved into this ethical vehicle that reinforces through the lyrics, the lifestyle of the Pentecostal.

Timothy Rommen in looking at Gospel Music in Trinidad writes, “musical style informs identity formation for both artists and audiences; illustrates how style thus becomes the vehicle for a multifaceted communal discourse about value and meaning and interrogates the process of personal identification or disidentification with musical style as a moment of ethical significance.”¹²² Rommen’s comments give ear to the idea of music style becoming a part of the identity of a religious group and goes further to link that style to the ethics of that group. So from this supposition it can be said that brass bands have a similar connection to Pentecostals in the Bahamas and that the particular style of music engaged is part of their identity. It further suggests that this musical vehicle influences their ethics in that the lyrics informs their lifestyle. Reflecting on the origins of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas allows a coming to the surface of various prongs of ethical sources that have contributed to the model that is unearthed and currently practiced.

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¹²² Timothy Rommen *Make Some Noise: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad* University of California Press Berkeley and Los Angeles 2007

3.3 Pentecostal theological Distinctives

3.3.1. Pneumatology

Pneumatology refers to the study of the Holy Spirit which in Trinitarian terms is the third person of the Godhead consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In order to understand the person and function of the Holy Spirit it will require a description that doesn't violate the Trinitarian perspective of the deity of each. In studying the Holy Spirit it becomes necessary to distinguish his personhood and or function to aid understanding. Perhaps the single most recognizable distinction of The Pentecostal tradition is the prominence of the Holy Spirit in its core definitions and daily lifestyle. There can be no relevant discussion of Pentecostalism without a tether to the Holy Spirit in some form. In terms of practice, this spiritual link has been deliberately prioritized over human reasoning and academic qualifications of validity. Its acceptance is an earnest act of faith that transcends the need for global validation from mainline churches, however, the broader ecumenical conversation encourages a study at the academic levels to improve and discover places of understanding that can contribute to the Christian church.

3.3.2 Hermeneutics

The method of interpreting the scriptures and the perspective of reasoning as to why a particular approach is adhered to has given rise to the various streams of Christianity that are practiced globally. In terms of Pentecostalism, the Bible has

always been central to the Pentecostal's worldview in one way or another.

Generally, in some instances the Bible has been used to support both positive and negative cultural, political and ethical positions. In terms of the negative roots of interpretation that have created an ethically weighted foundation in the Caribbean context, Noel Erskine writes,

...the hermeneutics the foreign agencies advocated represented a certain social class that was certainly not neutral in biblical interpretation. It represented an investment in the colonial economic system. The interpretation the Scriptures advocated was on the side of the planter class and against the masses of poor people. In this setting and with this approach to the Scriptures, which did not recognize the Eurocentric ideological captivity of the Scriptures to the brokers of power, the Bible was able to liberate neither the oppressor class nor the oppressed. The Bible was read in a way that affirmed the blindness and insensitivity of the church to the suffering masses.¹²³

I agree with Erskine's notion of the manipulative interpretation of the Bible to suit the slave-trade agenda because it describes how the environment for Pentecostal combustion was prepared through the friction sparking collision of Slave masters hermeneutics versus that of slaves seeking liberation from their plight. I disagree however with his idea that the Bible could not liberate the oppressed because the bible was the source to which the oppressed turned. Rather, the skewed Eurocentric hermeneutic became the catalyst for the evolutionary birth of an ethical culture that chose to revision what was posited in the culture and apply hope to their future by forging a new hermeneutic of the scriptures. This is perhaps why Pentecostals cling so intimately to the Bible and read it in a way that meets the needs of their circumstances. Erskine writes, "Help had to come from outside the mainline

¹²³ Noel Leo Erskine, *Plantation Church: How African American Religion was born in Caribbean Slavery* Oxford Scholarship online, 2014

churches, as oppressed people took matters in their own hands by interpreting the Christianity handed to them by missionaries and mainline churches from an African frame of reference. Black people created their own understanding of church and saw God through their own lens.¹²⁴

I believe that this crisis of hermeneutics engendered a search for a theology that embraced a spirituality that was the antithesis to what was previously presented. It created the ideal opportunity for the Pentecostal message to be received. It was a message that encouraged an inculcation of the Spirit of God into every aspect of religious practice such that the scripture was viewed with an expectation of encountering God as they read.¹²⁵ It was an experiential approach that relied heavily on a connectivity with God that was in part a rejection of the human influence that had shackled their existence prior. Unfortunately, this new approach led to a practice of distrusting the exegetical method that could have brought the movement more legitimacy sooner in the Christian ecclesia. Aaron Swoboda writes, "Pentecostal theology has been more strongly situated in action over and above theological reflection."¹²⁶ Swoboda infers that the preferred tendency of the Pentecostal approach lies in the doing as priority over understanding the motive behind the actions. It is this explanation of the doing that has the potential to aid the

¹²⁴ Noel Leo Erskine, *Plantation Church: How African American Religion was born in Caribbean Slavery* Oxford Scholarship online, 2014

¹²⁵ Andrew Davies, "What Does it Mean to Read the Bible as A Pentecostal?" *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* Vol. 18 Issue 2 Pages 216-229, 2009

¹²⁶ Aaron Jason Swoboda *Tongues and Trees: Towards a Green Pentecostal Pneumatology* Thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham July 2011

framing of a model of ethics for the Pentecostal that has hitherto not been attempted. This new hermeneutic that affected mood, emotions and escatological hope was not easily shaken but considered worthy of sharing to others. Accordingly Pentecostal hermeneutics is markedly different from other Christian approaches to the subject.

3.4 Pentecostal Ethical Distinctives

3.4.1. Can an ethical code be distinctively Pentecostal?

Generally speaking when we think of ethics we think of simply the right thing to do. Hugh Tredennick writes of the ethics of Aristotle, “Our task is to become good men, or to achieve the highest human good. That good is happiness; and happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue.”¹²⁷ This expression of ethics qualifies doing good with the achievement of happiness and suggests that the attainment of the latter is evidence of proper execution of good. It could be argued that happiness could also be realized by the achievement of a particular outcome that is not necessarily good for all concerned. However, Tredennick further juxtaposes the attainment of happiness to the quality of virtue operating and links these two as the fruition of ethics. Benedict De Spinoza writes, “For the ordinary surroundings of life which are esteemed by men [as their actions testify] to be the highest good, may be

¹²⁷ Hugh Tredennick *The Ethics of Aristotle The Nichomachean Ethics* Penguin Books Ltd. London England 1976 p. 18

classed under three heads—Riches, Fame and the Pleasures of Sense.”¹²⁸ Spinoza intimates that these “highest good” pursuits are flawed because they have no long-term benefit towards humanity’s well-being but rather provide obstacles to the preservation of the same; to the point of inviting death as a consequence to those who allow themselves to be engulfed by their acquisition. He turns to call these observable ‘highest good’ pursuits, evils, and describes their value as follows; “All these evils seem to have arisen from the fact that happiness or unhappiness is made wholly to depend on the quality of the object which we love. When a thing is not loved, no quarrels will arise concerning it—no sadness will be felt if it perishes—no envy if it is possessed by another—no fear or hatred, in short no disturbances of the mind...But love toward a thing eternal and infinite feeds the mind wholly with joy, and itself unmingled with any sadness, wherefore it is greatly to be desired and sought for with all our strength.”

Spinoza makes an important observation in that the quality of the object we love determines the quality of our ethic and whether or not we attain the level of happiness we ought to achieve. Spinoza’s reflection is apropos to the Pentecostal way of existing in the world. If we were to consider that the Pentecostal’s love for God, emphasized through a prominent affection of the Holy Spirit, it would explain the achievement of happiness in terms of a functioning ethic and the apparent inextricable attachment to the Bible in the way it is read, as well as its prominence in terms of ethical authority. In following Spinoza’s ethical template, it is because of

¹²⁸ Benedict De Spinoza *Ethics including the Improvement of Understanding* Prometheus Books Amherst New York 1989 P. 1-4

the eternal nature of the Holy Spirit that if pursued, as do Pentecostals, would produce no untoward consequences as do those of non-eternal constitution.

H. Richard Niebuhr delineates five types of Christian ethics that as an exercise, supports the idea that an ethical code can be distinctively Pentecostal. He lists these types as a means to aid the understanding of the ethical milieu we anxiously desire to navigate, through providing a multiplicity of options to which variations of faith and personal convictions have the freedom to exist. They are 1. The New Law Type [Christ against Culture] 2. The Natural Law Type, [Christ of Culture] 3. The Synthetic or Architectonic Type, [Christ Above Culture] 4. The Oscillatory Type, [Christ And Culture in Paradox] and 5. The Conversionist Type [Christ Transforming Culture]¹²⁹

It would appear that Pentecostalism could readily be included among the New Law Type, Christ against Culture, because of its historically otherworldly preoccupation. This type further includes Pentecostalism by describing a fundamental position of Christians being a new people with a new law where the primary ethic appears to be centered on holiness. This ethical nod to holiness speaks to an inheritance passed down from both Pietism and the earlier Holiness Movement having come out of the Wesleyan-Methodist movement.¹³⁰ ¹³¹ Niebuhr writes, “...this Christianity [is] one in which no point of dogma is more emphatically brought forward than the duty of a holy life, by means of which Christians are to shine as lights amid a crooked and

¹²⁹ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* Harper Collins Publishers, New York 2001 p. xxxvii-lv

¹³⁰ Vinson Synan *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in The 21st Century* Charisma House, Lake Mary, Florida 2011

¹³¹ Roger Olson, Pietism and Pentecostalism: Spiritual Cousins or Competitors? *Pneuma* Vol. 34 Iss. 3 2012 p. 319-344

corrupt generation...every sphere of life, down to the intimate and trivial, was put under the Spirit and rearranged.”¹³² The poignant reference to the Spirit as the primary source of ethical application presents a fitting description of where Pentecostalism continues to rest its hat throughout its existence. That is not to say that Pentecostalism is not evolving, because it is. With its expanding reach within the mainline religions under the heading of Charismatics¹³³, Pentecostalism has unapologetically engaged another of Niebuhr’s type of ethics; The Conversionist Type [Christ Transforming culture] as signs of social engagement and responsibility are popping up with the movement. Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori write, concerning what they term progressive Pentecostals [adherents with a more holistic ethic in view of their identity as a Pentecostal to value social engagement as important as the salvific experience], “...Being ‘Christ’s Hands’ in the community is a common theme linked to the suggestion that one encounters Jesus in everyday life by serving the poor and dispossessed of society.” This movement within the umbrella of Pentecostalism is growing according to Miller and Tetsunao and as such is an indicator of the shift towards the Conversionist type of Christian ethics, “Christ Transforming culture” depicted by Niebuhr.

So when we add the term Pentecostal to ethics in asking the question whether an ethical code can be distinctively Pentecostal, we invoke a particular set of filters that

¹³² H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2001 p. xlv

¹³³ Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 2003 p. xvii-xxii

are brought on because of the Pentecostal way of being in the world. Pentecostal Ethics then refers to the collectively practiced choices and decisions that amount to the right thing to do as an adherent of Pentecostalism to achieve the highest good and or happiness. While there are some references to Pentecostal ethics in terms of literary discussion, there is a notable silence in terms of reflection in this area particularly as it relates to the Bahamas Pentecostal population. This thesis seeks to contribute to that area and enhance the body of information available for discussion and review. So then we move to consider the literary contributions in this area that could be applied to the context of this research in the Bahamas. The sources from where Pentecostals draw their ethics is important in determining whether or not the ethics practiced by Pentecostals are unique to Pentecostalism. As we consider sources we are including the events in the past that have affected or influenced the direction of the movement. The Pentecostal movement is one that has had connections to the loins of the Holiness Movement that provided an avenue of spiritual escape, sought after by the ostracized poorer segments of the society. Eldin Villafañe writes concerning the strong feelings of oppression of the marginalized masses, "American Protestantism seemed cold, formal and unresponsive to their social, economic, political, moral and spiritual needs. There was a real sense of deprivation and oppression at the hands of the "powers that be," be they economic, political or religious."¹³⁴ The experiences described of the oppressed North American society can be applied to the Pentecostal base of the

¹³⁴ Eldin Villafañe *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids Michigan 1993

disenfranchised communities that share kindred experiences. So when the Azusa Street Revival broke out there was a hunger waiting to be fed among this quarter that rushed to the religious buffet that was being meted out. It validated their condition in life providing a sense of hope and belonging and ultimately fed their famished religious appetites. Accordingly, these circumstances in particular provides somewhat of a unique source from which the Pentecostals would draw and their develop their ethical code.

3.4.2 Spirit Baptism as an ethical instinct

To consider Spirit Baptism as an ethical instinct is to position the Spirit as the “go to” in all aspects of a Pentecostal’s way of being in the world. It is not one of several options but it is rather a wholesale release of the ethical process into the spirit realm as the authority on questions of lifestyle. The question posed by Frank Macchia in his book; *Baptized in the Spirit* whether or not Pentecostalism today has drifted away from its central distinctive is important to examine in terms of ethical evolution of Pentecostals in the Bahamas. Macchia alludes to the fact that a discussion about Pneumatology continues to come to the forefront in the Pentecostal arena but appears to be losing steam among some Pentecostal theologians. He suggests that this particular category of the Christian experience has the most viable means to position itself within the ecumenical community. I agree that there is value in utilizing the experience of Spirit Baptism as the conduit for broader Pentecostal contributions to the global ecclesia, however, there would need to be a developed network of bridges that would aid this. There is apparent

heavy emphasis on the initiation of this spiritual process to achieve the point where speaking in tongues or glossolalia would occur in order to provide the “initial evidence” of Spirit Baptism. Unfortunately, beyond this stage there is not much organized focus given. This may be one of the reasons there is a cooling off in terms of maintaining Spirit Baptism as a hallmark distinctive of Pentecostalism.

Notwithstanding this, engaged reflection on the source of ethics for the Pentecostal is one of the needed bridges that would present Spirit Baptism along with glossolalia with its uniquely Pentecostal flavor to the wider Christian community for contribution to the spiritual progression of the faith. This bridge has the task of accomplishing the shift of Pentecostal Pneumatology from the category of religious aberrations to the ecumenically accepted source from which Pentecostals find the underpinning of their ethics.

Simon Chan writes, “Pentecostals believe that tongues are not just signals of the in-breaking of divine revelation; it is also a prayer language that can be exercised throughout one’s life...this offers the best way for Pentecostals to develop their own distinctive path of spiritual progress.”¹³⁵ Chan suggests that the connection between Spirit Baptism and glossolalia is two-fold: The latter is a physical response to the divine revelation of God and that Spirit Baptism is more than just an initial experience, but an ongoing spiritual journey of intimacy with God that allows a spiritual prayer language to develop as part of overall maturity. It is the placement of the vehicle of Spirit Baptism within the process of spiritual maturation that

¹³⁵ Simon Chan *Pentecostal Theology and The Christian Spiritual Tradition* Wipf and Stock Eugene, Oregon 2011 p. 73-78

creates a powerful argument for Spirit Baptism being the ethical instinct for Pentecostals: It is because of the ongoing relational intimacy with the Holy Spirit that precipitates an osmosis of ethics among the Pentecostal.

3.4.3 Dependence on The Bible

In terms of Christianity, the Bible has always been a core element in the foundation of their faith. Matthias Becker suggests that the notion of the Bible being a divinely inspired book as described in 2 Timothy 3:16 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” is of particular importance to the Pentecostals, Charismatics and Evangelicals. He writes, “...among believers of these movements it has taken shape of an insurmountable rock of belief upon which the validity and truthfulness of one’s own faith rests.”¹³⁶ Guy Duffield and Nathaniel Van Cleave write concerning the foundations of Pentecostal theology, “All of God’s great purposes and plans for mankind are revealed only in the written Word, the Bible.”¹³⁷ Millard Erickson writes, “The Bible is the constitution of the Christian faith; it specifies what is to be believed and what is to be done.”¹³⁸ Daniel Akin says, “...without the Scriptures, which have Jesus Christ as their sole subject, we know nothing and see only

¹³⁶ Mathias Becker A Tenet Under Examination: Reflections on the Pentecostal Hermeneutical Approach, Journal of European Pentecostal Theological Association Vol. 24 Iss 1, 2004

¹³⁷ Guy Duffield and Nathaniel Van Cleave *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* Foursquare Media, Los Angeles, 2008 p. 5

¹³⁸ Millard J. Erickson *Introducing Christian Doctrine* Baker Academic Grand Rapids, Michigan 2001 p. 19

darkness and confusion in the nature of God and in nature itself.”¹³⁹ In particular for Pentecostal Christians, Andrew Davies presents its adherents as having an inseparable link to the Scriptures in that Pentecostals hope to meet God through the process of reading the Bible.¹⁴⁰ Robert Baker presents a three-pronged approach toward the reading of the Bible. He says Pentecostals focus on orthodoxy [right Belief], orthopraxy [right action and orthopathy [right feeling]. He suggests that this combined approach methodology is more holistic than what has traditionally been seen in the scholarly environment. He submits that in the attempt to read the Bible from a rational and observably critical distance, the scholar denies the emotional effects of the text on the reader and does not allow that aspect of the process to be included in the academic exploration; hence the value of the Pentecostal method to the community of Bible scholarship.¹⁴¹ Considering the multiple references to the Bible in terms of the Pentecostal environment it can be readily concluded the strong dependence on the Bible is not going to alter much within the near future but that its interaction and repeated linkages have actually become a part of the universal identity of being Pentecostal. I agree with Robert Baker in the assessment of value to the Pentecostal brand of Christianity adding the emotional aspect of the scriptural text upon the reader as a valid part of the evaluative impact of the Bible. This noted emotional connection can be considered a significant part of the attachment or

¹³⁹ Daniel Akin *A Theology for the Church* B and H Publishing Group Nashville, 2007 p. 3

¹⁴⁰ Andrew Davies, What Does it Mean to read the Bible as a Pentecostal, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* Vol. 18 Iss. 2 p. 216-229 2009

¹⁴¹ Rober Baker, Pentecostal Bible Reading Toward a model of reading for the formation of Christian Affections *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, Vol. 7 p34-38 1995

connection to the Scriptures. It can be argued that other books can also have an emotional connection to its reader so this may be a superficial observation. However, I think what makes this emotional impact different from other books is that the emotions experienced by the participant when reading the Bible is attributed to God. With this in mind, the acknowledged emotions take on a more reverent value as opposed to entertainment value in the Participants perception, when compared to other books with emotional cues.

3.5 Pentecostal Cultural Distinctives in The Bahamas

3.5.1 Dress

Pentecostal style of attire in the Bahamas is strongly linked to the American style of Pentecostal dress from where the local brand has developed in part via the parallel doctrines related to holiness coming out of the Azusa street phenomenon. TeResa Green writes that “Pentecostal churches adhere to strict dress codes primarily aimed at women.” She suggests that this slant towards women stems from a culturally dominant view on the reading of women’s roles in the Bible.¹⁴² These strict dress codes referred to, include an attempt to legislate holiness to its followers and promote modesty as a shield against worldly pride. This general form of dress is related to the idea of holy living being in part, an external expression of their religious worldview. It is further blended with strong culturally influenced nuances of color and decorative accessories from the Africanized ancestral roots brought

¹⁴² TeResa Green “A Gendered Spirit: Race, Class, And Sex In The African American Church” *Race Gender and Class*, New Orleans Vol. 10 Iss. 1 2003

into the culture through the Slave Trade. Added to this is the uniquely formalizing presentation of parishioners when attending church services and other high events, inherited from the European high-style influences of Monarchy embracing countries. So when we look at Pentecostal style of dress in the Bahamas we are looking at an aggregation of influences that separately can find their place within this local environment of attire. This blending makes the Bahamian Pentecostal somewhat identifiable in this category compared to other Christian groupings at least in earlier years. With the relaxing of some of the more stringent controls on dress this may no longer be as evident a means in readily determining Pentecostal adherents in the Bahamas. The Assemblies of God presents on its official website the following: "In the early days of the Pentecostal movement, piercing of women's ears for the wearing of earrings was strongly disapproved. Wearing any jewelry was considered sinful because the practice was associated with women of low morality standards. That assumption is no longer held, and some women feel their testimony is given less attention when the plainness of simple dress with no jewelry suggests to outsiders a lack of care about one's appearance."¹⁴³ This statement reflects the changing climate of restrictive guidelines for adherents to follow and still remain in good standing with the organization. The Church of God is seemingly not as lenient and presents on their official website, "If one is proud, worldly and immodest in their spirit, be sure it will be expressed in their manner of dress. One's clothing always speaks before their words ever do...." "Women must be arrayed in 'modest apparel...not with gold, or pearls, or costly array.' These articles of adornment, then,

¹⁴³ AssembliesofGod.org, Modesty in Physical Appearance [accessed 10/2/2018] (Phophecy 1994)

are not modest apparel. The wearing of them is prompted, not by feelings of humility and modesty, but by pride in the heart.”¹⁴⁴ It would appear that the Church of God from its official standpoint remains unaffected by the changing religious worldview of its Pentecostal sister organizations. The church of God of Prophecy writes, “...Ornaments of gold or other precious metals are a useless and frivolous waste of money, for they do not benefit the wearer either physically or spiritually. For this reason and because they are evidences of a prideful heart, they are unbecoming to a child of God.”¹⁴⁵ This statement comes from a document produced prior to the revisited viewpoint on this question of dress. In 1994 there was a change in the official stance of the church with regard to adornment and the current position reads as follows: “Scripture neither prohibits (absolutely) nor necessitates the use of ornamental adornment. It does give strong precautionary principles for its use such as modesty, shamefacedness, and sobriety...”¹⁴⁶ So now, since 1994 we see a softening of the position to be more in line with the intent of the scriptural verses once used to be more restrictive. This organizational phenomenon is part of the evolving identity of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas. The changes are slow and perhaps for some a long time coming, but the fact that changes are occurring is suggestive of growth and development; even a maturation of mission purpose and focus. It would follow then that the revisitation of the issue of dress and a thoughtful investigation as to why certain rules and regulations were not only put in place but

¹⁴⁴ ChurchofGod.net, Plain modest Dress, February 10, 2014 [accessed 10/2/2018]

¹⁴⁵ Church of God of Prophecy, Twenty-nine Important Bible Truths, Pamphlet

¹⁴⁶ COGOP.org Doctrine, 1994, [accessed 10/02/2018]

repeatedly supported despite the lack of scriptural support. It is inevitable that a consideration of ethics would necessarily come in to play as unsupported rules were given appropriate silence in terms of the official doctrine of the church.

3.5.2 Religious Observance

In layman's terms this means going to church. And as far as the Bahamian culture is concerned, religious observance is high on the list of things we do as a people. An article on Caribaya.com talks about religious observance in the Bahamas. "The deeply religious Bahamians find time to celebrate every occasion, from a wedding to a death. The prevalence of religion on the islands can be easily traced back to the Puritan Eleutheran adventurers who escaped to the Bahamas to flee a religiously oppressive atmosphere in England. Churches saturate the landscape, and locals don their most stunning attire for regular church service. West African slaves also brought religion, medicine, and music, all of which would have an impact on the Bahamas over the years."¹⁴⁷ Chelle Koster-Walton writes, "...Highly religious Bahama Islanders dress up in finery and put on their best voices to attend Sunday services."¹⁴⁸ Commisceo global writes, "Relatively speaking Bahamians take religion seriously. Most are devout Christians. It is not uncommon for everyday speech to be peppered with verses from the Bible and government programs or events and opened with short prayers. Sunday is a day for church going and prayer. People

¹⁴⁷ Caribaya.com, The Culture of the Bahamas: Religion and Festivals, [accessed 10/2/2018]

¹⁴⁸ Chelle Koster-Walton *Explorer's Guide Bahamas: A Great Destination* Countryman Press, Woodstock VT, 2010

dress up in their best clothes to attend religious services.”¹⁴⁹ So it is generally accepted that religious observance is high on the agenda of Bahamian culture and as such would weigh heavily on the ethical climate of the same. Particularly since these are sources persons have sufficient confidence in to repeatedly attend the same week after week for moral and ethical guidance.

3.5.3 Social and Political Engagement

Historically, Pentecostals have not been associated with either social or political engagement to the extent that it rises to public awareness. Neither would one be caused to consider these elements a part of the defining traits of Pentecostals in the Bahamas. That is not to say that Pentecostals have not participated in social causes or activities nor involved themselves in political discussions, but there has always been a sort of hands-off approach to these subjects in terms of viewing these activities as secondary to meeting the desired objective: It’s not that they feel that social engagement has no merit or allowing their voices be heard in political debates relative to matters of concern have no value, but rather the idea is that if they can get everyone sufficiently connected to the Holy Spirit that the same would guide the practices and judgments of the people. It is further intimated that blessings would rest upon these spirit-connected individuals, which would then eliminate the need for large-scale social or political involvement because the Spirit would meet the needs of all of their circumstances whatever they might be.

¹⁴⁹ Commisceo-Global.com, Bahamas Guide, The Bahamas - Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette, [accessed 10/2/2018]

Stephen Offutt writes, “Evangelical eschatological beliefs, particularly within Pentecostal denominations, fit with a separatist ethos. They believed that Christ’s return, and thus the end of the world, was near. Starting from this premise, evangelicals exercised simple logic when they concluded that addressing the problems of this world was a waste of time. Saving souls thus became the only really worthwhile endeavor for a faith community that was so attuned to the temporal nature of this world. Although Pentecostals have always responded to the poverty that surrounds them, they relied heavily on evangelistic activity as their primary strategy for engaging with society.

For many evangelicals, an intended but secondary effect of evangelism was the reduction of social ills. Christian Smith notes that evangelicals in Latin America were often interested in social and political change even as they sought isolation. Indeed, a strong belief among evangelicals was that if they were able to save enough souls, society and social structures would become more just and less corrupt as the individuals shaping those structures embarked on a journey of becoming more Christ-like.”¹⁵⁰ Offutt encapsulates the reasoning behind the apparent shunning of social and political engagement of Pentecostals. However, while I agree that some Pentecostals have a hurried eschatological view of Christ’s return, I do not think that the lateness of the hour is the primary reason for shunning social and political involvement to the extent of considering it a waste of time. I think the primary reason was what Offutt mentions next and that is the idea that if Pentecostals could get sufficient people saved then it would impact society through a reduction of

¹⁵⁰ Stephen Offutt, *New Centers of Global Evangelicalism in Latin America and Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge p. 131-153

corruption and crime. In other words more people guided by the Holy Spirit. Donald Miller writes, "What is not well understood is that many Pentecostal churches especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are involved in significant social ministries related to education, healthcare, and economic development. This defies the stereotype that Pentecostals are focused primarily on the life hereafter..."¹⁵¹ I concur with Donald Miller's sentiment because his study provides legitimate support in lifting the veil of perception that belittles the missionary efforts of Pentecostalism. With the advent of media ministries information presenting the social outreach efforts of the Pentecostal denominations are readily seen.

¹⁵¹ Donald Miller, 2006 SSSR Presidential Address: Progressive Pentecostals: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Dec., 2007), pp. 435-445

4. Gambling as a challenge for Bahamian Pentecostals

4.1 Study From the Literature

4.1.1 Context

The Bahamas is a small archipelagic nation that gained its independence from The United Kingdom on July 10, 1973. From its inception, its official national documents and policies reflected many Christian values. Among them was a negative view of gambling as detrimental to the favorable development of the nation as a society to be respected and emulated. Gambling in this context refers to playing of a game of chance for winnings in money or money's worth.¹⁵²

As such, words to this effect were written into the constitution and laws of the Bahamas. Appreciating the conservative beginnings of the Bahamas, the issue of gambling became a struggle when the means to develop the country seemed most viable through tourism. Tourism became the nations' largest industry for economic growth and development, however along with this boom came the 'vice' of gambling as many of the hotel operators wanted to include casinos as part of their amenities package they had available to their patrons. The compromise came in where it was agreed by the government to only allow visiting non-Bahamians to participate in the casino so as to keep the negative aspects of gambling spilling over into the populace.

¹⁵² Statute Law of the Commonwealth of Bahamas, Lotteries and Gaming Act of 1969

Despite these efforts, an underground network of gambling developed for Bahamians who would not be excluded from having access to these activities.

4.1.2 History of the development of the issue

Due to the proliferation of an unregulated gaming industry, the Government of the Bahamas called for a referendum on the question of regulating the “numbers houses” also known as “web-shop gambling”. The underground enterprise has been expanding unabated for years to the point of operating in the open and popping up, it would seem, on almost every corner. These entities would apparently obtain business licenses to operate as a legal ‘Internet café’ but provide gambling services to its patrons instead. This fronting is coupled with seeming unwillingness on the part of the police to enforce the laws in this area. Gambling had risen to such public awareness that the issue became a part of the political debate: During the 2012 General Election campaign of the Progressive Liberal Party who went on to win the Government of the Bahamas, promises were made to bring a referendum on the issue of a national lottery and gambling. In the campaign document entitled ‘A Charter for Governance,’ The Progressive Liberal Party outlines that if elected, would “Provide details for a referendum on a National Lottery and gambling in The Bahamas”¹⁵³ within the first 100 days of taking office. After winning the election, the public discourse on this topic ensued and the country became engaged in an ethical debate unlike any I have ever witnessed.

¹⁵³ Progressive Liberal Party *A Charter for Governance* [Nassau, Bahamas 2012], 11

The Law states in Part II section 3 of the Gaming Act of 1969 in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas; “Subject to the provisions of this Act, all lotteries are unlawful.” The Act further defines “lottery” as follows:

“includes any sweepstake and any game, method or device whereby money or money’s worth is distributed or allotted in any manner depending upon or to be determined by chance or lot, held, drawn, exercised or managed whether in The Bahamas or elsewhere or upon the basis of the outcome of a future contingent event whether occurring in The Bahamas or elsewhere and also includes the game called or known as “numbers”¹⁵⁴

As a part of the 2012 General Election campaign of the governing party of the Bahamas, promises were made to bring a referendum on the issue of a national lottery and gambling. In the campaign document entitled ‘*A Charter for Governance*,’ The Progressive Liberal Party outlines that if elected, would “Provide details for a referendum on a National Lottery and gambling in The Bahamas”¹⁵⁵ within the first 100 days of taking office. As the public discourse came to the forefront, the discussion has opened up questions of discrimination regarding the rights of locals and in particular Bahamians to engage in casino gambling within the Bahamas. The law currently prohibits Bahamians from engaging in casino gambling.

The Law states; “. No person —

- . (a) Under eighteen; or
- . (b) Who possesses or requires a permit to engage in gainful occupation under the provisions of any statute regulating immigration; or
- . (c) Who —
 - . (i) Is the holder of a permanent residence certificate granted under any statute regulating immigration; or
 - . (ii) Is ordinarily resident in; or

¹⁵⁴ Statute Law of The Commonwealth of the Bahamas *Gaming Act of 1969*

¹⁵⁵ Progressive Liberal Party *A Charter for Governance* 2012 Nassau p. 11

- . (iii) Is engaged in any business or profession, or employed for gain, in;
or
- . (iv) Is in the employment of the Government of The Bahamas;
- . Or
- . (d) Being the husband or wife of any such person as is mentioned in paragraph (b) or (c) of this section,

shall take part in gaming to which this Part applies on any premises in respect of which licences under this Act are for the time being in force, and any such person who takes part in gaming as aforesaid is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars.”¹⁵⁶

However, with the rise of numbers houses providing ready access to gambling through sophisticated banking methods and online services, this prohibition has been effectively circumvented. The trickle down impact of the global recession on the economy of the Bahamas has heightened this phenomenon as the new financial hope among the poorer segments of the society. It has caused the government to engage the possibility of finding revenue in this industry to provide increasing services for its citizenry and to fulfill campaign promises.

As the debate developed, the focus centered on whether or not web shops, better known as “numbers” houses, should be allowed to operate legally and whether a national lottery should be established. The consideration was presented to the electorate of the Bahamas with a view to generating tax income for the country from a burgeoning industry that is expanding exponentially unchecked and unregulated, partly because of a lack of political will to enforce the law in this area.

¹⁵⁶ Statute Law of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas *Gaming Act of 1978*

4.1.2.1 Ethical Positions taken on the Issue

The proponents of gambling launched an intense public campaign reminiscent of the caliber of a general election. They have promoted several points as to why the Bahamian public should support gambling. Chief among them are the economic benefit: According to the industry, 3,000 direct jobs and an estimated 2,000 related jobs have been created as a result of web shop gaming.¹⁵⁷ This is evidence of a good benefit to the society through providing much-needed jobs in a recession. In this point they are subscribing to a consequentialist ethic where the end results determine the right or wrong of the action. The economic impact gambling brings similarly incorporates a utilitarian ethic in that a large number of persons are positively affected by having incomes to take care of their families and contribute to the society through payment to various government corporations in the form of taxes, utilities and national insurance.

The utilitarian perspective advanced by the supporters of gambling has perhaps had their opinions and decisions influenced by the significant financial gains they have enjoyed for decades. Indeed it would seem that their vested interests have guided their efforts to aggressively push back against their opponents. Hollinger writes, “Vested interests influence not only values and goals but also empirical judgments.”¹⁵⁸ This becomes particularly noticeable in the willingness for the numbers owners to take the church head on in this issue. Historically there was a

¹⁵⁷ VoteYesBahamas.com

¹⁵⁸ Dennis P. Hollinger, *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World* Grand Rapids, Baker Academic 2002 p. 183

certain level of respect for the 'church' in that you steered clear of direct confrontation even though you disagreed with their position. However, as pointed out by an editorial in the local daily newspaper, this ethic has changed.

"In recent years with rise of internet technology and steely boldness, the numbers men of old and their new contemporaries came from the shadows and openly set up illegal shops in front of the political parties and police, declaring to Bahamians that they are now forces who will no longer accept being repressed.

The numbers bosses now sponsor charitable events, advertise and one has even donated openly to at least one government agency. The Bahamas is a very protestant nation with the overwhelming majority of its people identifying themselves as Christians. Churchgoing is high. Consequently, the political parties have not wanted to face-off against a church that, for the most part, has been rabidly against gambling. Despite this fear by our great political parties, the numbers bosses have now decided that it is time to demonstrate to the church of Christ and its Bahamian leaders that they do not fear them. They have set up a lobby and have let it be known that \$1.5 million will be spent in an advertising effort to win the referendum. Via this act, they have declared opposition to the church."¹⁵⁹

What is becoming more evident is that we are seeing the driving impetus of vested interests rising with louder voices and bolder steps. This is infused into the influence of a postmodern context of increasing secularization and the impact of religion losing its once held social position of influence. "There is a rejection of metanarratives and increased secularization as religion loses its social position."¹⁶⁰ This juxtaposition of Christian ethics against a personal pursuit brings forward an ethical egoism in the practice of patrons of the numbers houses. This comes about through finding a measure of personal happiness in their actions, so much so that they continue to repeat it in an almost 'Pavlov' fashion. The danger comes about

¹⁵⁹ Erica Wells, *The Church vs. the numbers men: A fight for legitimacy* The Nassau Guardian 9 July 2012 Vol. 167 No. 187

¹⁶⁰ Dennis P. Hollinger, *Christian Ethics ET 501* Class notes Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Hamilton Spring 2013

when this activity takes on religious connotations and preeminence over God and becomes a god to that individual. David Gill writes, “Area Principle 1: Never allow anyone or anything to threaten God’s central place in your life. Rather make it your top priority to value and cultivate your relationship with God.”¹⁶¹ This prescriptive ethic is helpful to those adhering to a Christian worldview in navigating the map of their lives. Its foundation stems from the first commandment of the Decalogue that deals with the singular right for God to be first in our lives. Gil writes, “Probably the greatest rival to God in our era is the self. The gospel of self-satisfaction, personal autonomy and self-determination is wowing and wooing thousands of converts today.”¹⁶²

What about those persons who have another worldview that has developed as a result of the cultural ideology of an accessible avenue for financial support? Indeed the numbers game has been around for a long time. It is only recently, due to the economic downturn of the past several years that they have found a greater market opportunity to sell a dream that the marginalized segments of the society are attracted to. Perhaps this may be one of the reasons the Bahamas did not feel the recessionary pinch as hard as some other countries because of this accessible avenue for financial gain. It is well noted that it was during the downturn of the economy that there was an upturn in the numbers industry. Numbers houses became as common as churches and could be found on almost every street corner.

¹⁶¹ David Gill, *Doing Right: Practicing Ethical Principles* Downers Grove Intervarsity Press 2004 p. 84

¹⁶² David Gill, *Doing Right: Practicing Ethical Principles* Downers Grove Intervarsity Press 2004 p. 86

This proliferation created a language that became interwoven into a cultural ideology that is readily recognized by any member of the Bahamian society.

Cecil Newry writes, “Web shop gaming has become the savior for many families. The winnings from these number houses are at times the only income for many single mothers who are able to make 90 dollars out of 10 cents. “Spinning” has become the country’s number one recreation; and the term is now a household word in many social sectors. And with jobs being scarce in the country, the web shops have picked up the slack, employing 3000 Bahamians throughout the Bahamas, not to mention causing an economic boom in the rental property industry.

Newry writes, “In truth, the ‘numbers man’ has become the new Jesus, the savior for many. It is he who gives them hope in facing another day.”¹⁶³

The prime Minister alludes to the economic benefit by saying that a “Failed referendum would increase unemployment...these people will either have to go deeper underground illegally or we will have to find a way to find alternative employment for them.”¹⁶⁴ This opens up the ethical complexity we often run into when we are dealing with real people with real livelihoods at stake. How do we come to an ethical decision? Should the Bahamian electorate vote yes in order to preserve the jobs of persons working in an illegal operation? If the government chooses to employ these persons in the case of a ‘no’ vote then is it fair that the voting public should end up paying for the displaced workers through expanding the

¹⁶³ Cecil Newry, *Bahamas Gambling Referendum Chaos* straighttalkbahamas.com January 2013

¹⁶⁴ Taneka Thompson, *PM: ‘No’ vote would present dilemma* The Nassau Guardian 16 January 2013 Vol. 168 No. 44

deficit? And if we agree to expand the budget, is that ethically responsible to the future generations that will inherit a worse financial situation because we decided to borrow more money today?

Those persons subscribing to a postmodern worldview that rejects the metanarrative of the Gospel seemingly arrive at a concept of relativism where there are no moral absolutes but ethical decisions become fluid to its situational container. This cultural relativism view comes out in the undertones of the Prime Minister's remarks in an interview: "They number well over 100,000 people who play...I am absolutely amazed...It has to become a government regulated industry just as the casinos are."¹⁶⁵ The suggestion is that since a large percentage of the population, which is approximately 400,000, actively participates in playing numbers then it lends toward favoring its legalization and warrants eliminating the stigma of wrongdoing. Indeed this position is one that is relative to the culture of numbers playing.

The concept of deontological ethics can have a role in this complexity in that Pentecostals must decide if supporting an illegal operation goes against Christian principles. As law-abiding citizens the answer should be yes; indicative of our belief that it is inherently wrong to support an illegal enterprise. From the perspective of the employed workers in the industry their view would perhaps fall under a relativism ethical system in that the widespread cultural practice of playing

¹⁶⁵ Candia Dames, *Christie: More than 100,000 play numbers* The Nassau Guardian 19 November 2012 Vol. 167 no. 296

numbers made it okay to consider the job as legitimate employment with no inherent wrong.

In this whole question the concept of justice seems to be overlooked by many. The fact remains that 'numbers houses' are illegal operations and represent an injustice to the society at large in that it goes against society's acceptance of the laws that exist and an expectation of those living in that society to abide by the same unless and until these laws are changed by the appropriate mechanisms. Keller writes, "Justice is right relationships...this means then that, that Biblical righteousness is inevitably social because it is about right relationships."¹⁶⁶ Hence the numbers industry represents an injustice to society at least from theological perspectives in that this relationship is in opposition to one another. However, if the relationship of the gambling enterprises becomes favourable with society then gambling would no longer be seen as an injustice according to this definition. Velasquez et al. say, Justice means giving each person what he or she deserves or, in more traditional terms, giving each person his or her due.¹⁶⁷ From this perspective, the individual who participates in an illegal activity is due to be punished according to the law. But here again, if the circumstances include the fact that the individual was employed by this industry because they were unable to find work elsewhere and needed a means

¹⁶⁶ Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice* New York Dutton 2010 p. 10

¹⁶⁷ Manuel Velasquez, Claire Andre, Thomas Shanks, S.J., and Michael J. Meyer Justice and Fairness Markkula Center for Applied Ethics 2018 scu.edu accessed 12 January 2018

of financial support, does this individual deserve to be punished for attempting to support their family? Is it fair to treat this individual

4.1.3 Analysis of Significance

The ethical conflict within the Bahamas had risen to national awareness as segments of society began to voice their opinions, positions of support, or condemnation relative to the direction the government should take the country concerning this issue. From a civic standpoint it was a struggle involving acceptable methods of growing the economy and issues of rights of locals to participate in an industry formerly reserved for tourists; as if to suggest that the local population did not have the cerebral capacity like the foreign nationals to moderate their own behaviour in a socially acceptable manner when exposed to a gambling environment. Further to this, was this law of the country that prohibited gambling was about to be changed or violated.

The Christian community was no less conflicted as the assumption of a unified voice from this segment of society was not forthcoming. There seemed to be a wait and see approach as other voices in the society stepped forward without hesitation, while significant internal struggling ensued. The hope was to find a consensus but this did not happen. Instead, individual denominations slowly put in the public arena their particular viewpoint and the undecided members of each denomination generally followed the sentiments of their particular organization. I think that the lack of unanimity at the hierarchy of the Christian leaders created a sense of

freedom on the part of followers to make their own decision in this regard. The whole affair became somewhat polarizing in the church community and set off numerous debates with support being drawn from sources they felt were authoritative.

4.1.4 Implications for Pentecostals

As members of the Christian community, the Pentecostals were now feeling the pressure to make a public statement on the issue as it would seem negligent on their part given the climate in the country where each of the denominations were presenting their positions on the matter.

Notwithstanding the fact that varying points of view were being presented on this issue, I imagine that Pentecostals themselves would have wanted their organization to make a public statement on the issue as well. The question is can they find scriptural support for their position. Aaron Johnson in support of gambling speaks to the church's ethical authority when he writes, "On what authority are you propagating your anti-gambling philosophy? Do you have any scripture to substantiate your organizational conception in respect to your anti-gambling belief?"¹⁶⁸

This episode created a poignant question for the Pentecostal: How does one arrive at an appropriate Biblical response to such a complex ethical question particularly with the absence of specific reference in the scriptures. Further to this, how do Pentecostals engage with the Bible when deciding their position on any given ethical

¹⁶⁸ Aaron Johnson, What scripture supports church's stance on gambling The Nassau Guardian August 9, 2012

issue? Historically it is often been assumed that there is a close connection to the Bible in Pentecostal praxis. For example, French Arrington writes, “The starting point and very foundation for Pentecostal faith and praxis has been the biblical text. The real issue in Pentecostalism has become hermeneutics, that is, the distinctive nature and function of Scripture and the roles of the Holy Spirit, the Christian community, grammatical-historical research, and personal experience in the interpretive process.”¹⁶⁹

In this observation, Arrington supports the connection of the Bible to Pentecostalism by describing the Bible as foundational to both faith and practice. He is so convinced of the inextricable connection between the two that he quickly moves to pointing towards interpretation as the battleground for Pentecostalism without any further comment on this point. He draws our attention to areas of significant influence that by themselves are insufficient to provide a complete definition of how Pentecostals use the Bible, but collectively place one on the defining road that must be traveled by anyone attempting to review Pentecostal hermeneutics.

I feel however that the strong statement made by Arrington indicating that ‘the Bible is foundational to both faith and praxis’ requires more exploration. Additional research needs to consider as to how the Bible came to be so closely associated to Pentecostal tenets and practice and, for that matter, whether this assumed connection is actually as strong as it might be thought, since Arrington’s statement includes a vast area of assumption of how the scriptural text is engaged by

¹⁶⁹ French Arrington, The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals *Pneuma: The Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies* [Vol 16 Spring 1994]101-107

Pentecostals. This assumption may include the following questions: Is the Bible one of several sources for guidance for living and for doctrine, or the only authority? Are the doctrinal statements of faith found in Pentecostalism drawn from the Bible? Do Pentecostal statements of faith agree with actual practice? Is the scriptural text open for debate in its meaning and application? Are the aspirational goals established by the Bible actually attainable? The unsupported assumption of biblical priority often becomes a motivating source for interpretive discussions, which may lead the conversation to perhaps unverifiable ends.

The Pentecostal Church in addressing the issue should determine whether a position should be taken at this level or left to the individual's personal conscience. If gambling is viewed as something that warrants particular guidance within the Pentecostal worldview, then a definitive position should be taken as the agent of Christian ethics, and state the Biblical moral ideal and encourage those within the community of Pentecostals to pursue and develop an allegiance to the Bible in terms of guiding principles of lifestyle. In so doing, they would be affirming a correlation with God that allows the principles of the Bible to be displayed in their daily living. In cases where the ideal has been compromised or fallen short, Christian caring or Pastoral care ought to move with compassion to help restore the individuals to a relationship with Christ coupled with appropriate advise on the merits of avoiding the vice. With respect to the society it is important for the church to voice this same theological position it presents to its parishioners but in a way that may assist others who don't possess a Christian worldview to appreciate the positive aspects of

the moral stance. Perhaps appealing to the social aspects of the issue. At a minimum, persons should be encouraged to follow the law.

With all of this tension the church is viewed as Christ and culture in paradox¹⁷⁰, it will take the grace of God to cause us to be committed to the principles and practice of the Gospel while knowingly living in a fallen society that struggles to make ethical decisions within that fallen framework.

4.1.5 Responses from church Leaders

The Adventists spoke out telling the Bahamian population to put their trust in God rather than the shortcut of gambling.¹⁷¹ The Anglican Church makes a call to end the practice of gambling suggesting that the negatives outweigh the benefits.¹⁷² Six Christian pastors formed a coalition and said, “Gambling is and will always be contrary to [Christian] values, and our prayer is that the majority of Bahamians will continue to hold this to be so and will vote “no” to gambling in the upcoming referendum.”¹⁷³ The Catholic Archbishop of Nassau writes, “while games of chance in and of themselves are not evil, habitual gambling can lead to a number of evils.”¹⁷⁴ Methodist Minister, Reverend Dr. Emmette Weir compares the situation in Panama

¹⁷⁰ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, San Francisco, Harper San Francisco 2001

¹⁷¹ John Garcia, Bahamas: Adventist leader tells Bahamians to trust God not gambling for success, interamerica.org, July 16, 2012 [accessed 13 Feb 2018]

¹⁷² George Conger, Church Call to end gambling in the Bahamas, anglican.ink 19 November 2015, [accessed 13, Feb 2108]

¹⁷³ Lyall Bethel et al., Pastors reject gambling view of Rev. Philip McPhee, *The Nassau Guardian* July 9, 2012

¹⁷⁴ Most Rev. Patrick Pinder, *Illegal Gambling in the Bahamas*, Pastoral letter archdioceseofnassau.org [accessed 13 February, 2018]

to that of the Bahamas. He tells of how the President of the Methodist church in Panama Reverend Luis Veagra, instead of publicly preaching against the national lottery since it had become legal for citizens of Panama to do so, opted to instruct its members through the use of its ethical statements by saying they “encourage their members not to participate in it.”¹⁷⁵ Reverend Weir suggested the Bahamas do the same thing as Panama.

On this heated question of gambling in the Bahamas, each of the various classical denominations put out their arguments in the public domain and the Pentecostals were no different. Notably, there seemed to be a general opposition to the practice but many preferred to speak in noncommittal terms, seemingly leaving the decision up to the individual. Beyond that there was an apparently muddled approach to the controversy where the opposing groups were jockeying to be the loudest voices in the debate. Questions were asked whether some pastors were encouraged to support the regulating of numbers houses because of the generous support given to their churches’ programs and initiatives by these industry personnel.¹⁷⁶ Other questions included whether one really knows where the money comes from anyway prior to arriving in the collection plate and if some good could be derived from possibly tainted money then it is a positive outcome.

¹⁷⁵ Rev. Dr. J. Emmette Weir, The Church And Gambling - A Burning Moral Issue, tribune242.com 30 December 2016 [accessed 13 February, 2018]

¹⁷⁶ Craig Butler, Legalizing Gambling in the Bahamas, Bahamapundit.com February 18, 2008 [accessed 13 February, 2018]

4.1.6 Significance of Learning for research

Indeed, the question of gambling is not new, nor its history of a negative vibe. Ondina and Justo Gonzalez write in their book, *History of Christianity in Latin America*, with regard to the Third Mexican council in 1585 of the Catholic Church it was said, “Anyone knowing of another person who gambled, lived with a concubine, or blasphemed was required to report the sinner under pain of ecclesiastical censure.”¹⁷⁷ So centuries ago we find the categorization of gambling as a sin by the Catholic Church. Interestingly, during this current debate the head of the Catholic Church in the Bahamas has lifted the historicity of sin attached to gambling and has not opposed the practice. Quoting from an interview with a local newspaper, Archbishop Patrick Pinder says, “The Catholic tradition recognises that while gambling is not inherently evil, there is the tendency of human nature to go to excess and to extremes.”¹⁷⁸ Prominent Catholics have subsequently quoted their Bishop as the authority and placed their personal opinion inline with their leadership--The Bible is noticeably silent in their discussion.

The law in the Bahamas currently prohibits gambling by residents and citizens in the Bahamas. The Law states in Part II section 3 of the Gaming Act of 1969 in the

¹⁷⁷ Ondina E. González and Justo L. González. *Christianity in Latin America: A History* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 68

¹⁷⁸ Andrew Knowles “Gambling Not Evil, Says Catholic Bishop” *The Bahama Journal* jonesbahamas.com 19 July 2012 [accessed 12 February, 2014]

Commonwealth of the Bahamas; “Subject to the provisions of this Act, all lotteries are unlawful.”¹⁷⁹ The Act further defines ‘lottery’ as follows:

“Includes any sweepstake and any game, method or device whereby money or money’s worth is distributed or allotted in any manner depending upon or to be determined by chance or lot, held, drawn, exercised or managed whether in The Bahamas or elsewhere or upon the basis of the outcome of a future contingent event whether occurring in The Bahamas or elsewhere and also includes the game called or known as “numbers.”¹⁸⁰

As the public discourse came to the forefront, the discussion has opened up questions of discrimination regarding the rights of locals and in particular Bahamians to engage in casino gambling within the Bahamas. The law currently prohibits Bahamians from engaging in casino gambling. Despite the law, those segments of the society with opportunity for gain through finding loopholes in the law that would allow them to cloak their actual practices in terms of engaging in a form of gambling, have moved forward with their agenda in an unrelenting fashion. What is becoming more evident is that we are seeing the driving impetus of vested interests walking with bolder steps. This is infused into the influence of a postmodern context of ethical relativism and the impact of religion losing its once held social position of influence. Philip J. Ivanhoe writes, “Ethical or moral relativism... is the view that (1) ethical claims are true or false only relative to some

¹⁷⁹ Statute Law of The Commonwealth of the Bahamas Part II section 3 Gaming Act of 1969

¹⁸⁰ Statute Law of The Commonwealth of the Bahamas Gaming Act of 1969

particular perspective, and (2) no particular perspective is privileged over any other.”¹⁸¹ While I disagree with the suggestion that there is no absolute truth, I recognize that ethical relativism is being practiced. Its application would tend to distance the Bible from being a viable source of ethical modeling simply on the grounds that Bible claims to be the ultimate truth. Contextually, this juxtaposition of Christian ethics against a personal pursuit brings forward an ethical egoism in the practice of patrons of the ‘numbers houses.’ This comes about through finding a measure of personal happiness in their actions, so much so that they continue to repeat it in an almost ‘Pavlov’ fashion. The danger comes about when this activity takes on religious connotations and begins to substitute itself as the source of ethical standards.

For the Pentecostal, becoming aware of the propensity for an issue to cause the displacement of the Bible as the primary source for ethical conduct would tend to encourage choosing an opposing view. At this point, the question arises again concerning the nature of the relationship between the Bible and the Pentecostal. How is the Bible engaged such that a decision is made one way or the other? What about those persons who have another worldview that has developed as a result of the cultural ideology of an accessible avenue for financial support? Indeed the numbers racket has been around for a long time. It is only recently, due to the economic downturn of the past several years that they have found a greater market

¹⁸¹ Philip J. Ivanhoe, “Pluralism Toleration and Ethical Promiscuity” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 37, no. 2 [2009], 313

opportunity to sell a dream that the marginalized segments of the society are attracted to.

It can be noted, “On Sept. 24, 2012--Standard & Poor’s Ratings Services said it revised the outlook on its long-term rating on The Commonwealth of The Bahamas to negative from stable.”¹⁸² This statement reflects the financial mood of the country and the seizing of an opportunity by the gambling industry. It is noted that it was during the downturn of the economy that there was an upturn in the numbers industry. Numbers houses became as common as churches and could be found on more main streets and shopping plazas than before. This proliferation created a language that became interwoven into a cultural ideology that is readily recognized by any member of the Bahamian society.

Cecil Newry writes, “Web shop gaming has become the savior for many families. The winnings from these number houses are at times the only income for many single mothers who are able to make 90 dollars out of 10 cents. “Spinning” has become the country’s number one recreation; and the term is now a household word in many social sectors. And with jobs being scarce in the country, the web shops have picked up the slack, employing 3000 Bahamians throughout the Bahamas, not to mention causing an economic boom in the rental property industry. In truth, the number man has become the new Jesus, the savior for many. It is he who gives them hope in

¹⁸² Lisa Schineller “The Bahamas Outlook Revised To Negative On Deteriorating Fiscal Profile” standardandpoors.com 24 September, 2012 [accessed 13 February, 2014]

facing another day.”¹⁸³ This expression by Cecil Newry that the number man has become the “new Jesus” becomes a flash point for Pentecostalism to reflect on its role in the Christian arena and take steps to further define itself in an effort to become more prepared to meet the ideological and ethical challenges that are unavoidably approaching.

When considering Pentecostal Theology, there are several traits that appear to attach themselves as defining characteristics. Foremost among them is Spirit Baptism. Frank Macchia’s approach to the subject of Spirit Baptism speaks to a revisiting of the traditional view in Pentecostalism. He writes that Spirit Baptism is, “a baptism into the love of God that sanctifies, renews, and empowers until Spirit baptism turns all of creation into the final dwelling of God.”¹⁸⁴

This view places emphasis on the day-to-day decisions and the lifestyle impacted by the all-encompassing love of God that affects every aspect of the individual. What I like about this perspective is that it integrates rather than compartmentalizes Spirit Baptism. Oftentimes the segregation of Spirit Baptism as a stand-alone phenomenon creates an environment of choice that is unwarranted, hence the multiplicity of debates on the subject. However, if one accepts that the Holy Spirit exists within the Trinity as does Macchia, then room should be given for the Spirit to affect every aspect of one’s life and not be limited to only identifying expressions. Indeed an in-depth reflection of the renewing, empowering, and love encompassing nature created by Spirit-Baptism may lend some insight to the way in which Pentecostals

¹⁸³ Cecil Newry, Bahamas Gambling Referendum Chaos straighttalkbahamas.com January 2013 [accessed April 12, 2013]

¹⁸⁴ Frank D. Macchia. Baptized in the Spirit: A global Pentecostal Theology [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006], 60

engage the Bible. I support Macchia's recommendation that a renaissance of the traditional view of Spirit-Baptism would be advantageous if not progressive as it would assist in the pinning-down of a definition of Pentecostal distinctives and praxis, enabling successful growth and development of a Pentecostal ethic. In other words we would have a stable foundation upon which we can build a theology. Another part of the distinctive characteristic of Pentecostalism is the role of the Bible in daily living, in particular, as a manual for the practical theological expression of one's way of life. Andrew Davies writes, "The average Pentecostal does not read the Bible for educational purposes, or even particularly out of a sense of obligation to religious observance, but fundamentally to encounter God's presence in the text. They believe that they do that at two levels: ultimately by seeing the person of God himself as he is revealed through the sacred page, but actually in the first instance by experiencing the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, who makes that epic divine encounter possible in that he illuminates and elucidates the biblical truths [one theme that is almost universal among Pentecostals is the acceptance on the basis of John 14 that the Spirit comes to lead believers into (a fuller) knowledge of the truth]¹⁸⁵ Interestingly within this statement there is a reinforcement of the notion that the Spirit plays a significant role in the interaction with the scripture. This interaction is perhaps part of the approach required when facing complex ethical questions. Perhaps, a broadening of the understanding of the Pentecostal's personal worship should be encouraged to

¹⁸⁵ Andrew Davies. "Reading in the Spirit: some brief observations on Pentecostal interpretation and the ethical difficulties of the Old Testament," *Journal of Beliefs & Values: Studies in Religion & Education*, [2009], 30:3, 303-311

not only, use the Bible to develop a response to questions involving complex issues but notice God's presence in the rigor of defining a Pentecostal ethic using academic tools and the even the liturgies that have been cautiously avoided due to the lack of emotionally interactive cues. I would say our practical theological expression ought to consider what may be just over the traditional border of Pentecostalism. It should not alter our heading as Pentecostals but provide a broader authority as Disciples of Christ.

As Pentecostalism continues to multiply across standard boundaries of denominational limits, it becomes increasingly important for mechanisms, models and frameworks to be clearly delineated in order to maintain our identity even though we are affected by the contexts in which we exist and remain true to our spiritual heritage in the sense that we not abandon our baby pictures but acknowledge that we have grown and developed since birth. Indeed it would seem that this global movement in defining itself has somewhat redefined ecumenism from the perspective of the 'one church' pursuit towards more of a unity of thought, practice and experience.

Henry Lederle writes, "The goals of ecumenical endeavour shifted from structural unity and conciliar fellowship to the ideal of unity in "reconciled diversity", an unfortunate terminological choice for a form of unity which advocates the continued

existence of denominational churches but seeks to reconcile divisive aspects.”¹⁸⁶

Similarly there lies onus upon the Pentecostals to make more of an effort to engage the ecumenical society in that the idea of a community of laborers working together for the advancement of the Gospel falls in the middle of their theology. Shane Clifton writes, “Pentecostals are increasingly aware not only of their emergence as a community that sought unity in the Spirit but, further, that their growth and prominence place upon them a responsibility to take seriously the shared mission of the gospel.”¹⁸⁷ The Gospel is bigger than the agents who dispense it, the ministries who proclaim it and the denominations who define it. The Gospel is not a selfish message for privileged thinkers afraid of the tangibles of an invisible God, nor is the Gospel a bottled genie awaiting an emotional rub to grant the wishes of an increasingly materialistic society. The Gospel is for everyone; of every status and every culture and every time to bring salvation to the lost and eternal life to the damned. The Pentecostal collective are merely partners; co-labourers with Christ to help to get the message out.

The quest to produce a working model for making ethically defensible decisions when approaching controversial subjects is something that is in my view, needed to provide a foundational framework for the ever-widening Pentecostal phenomenon. The hope is that this growth can be supported with a practical theology that is

¹⁸⁶ Henry Lederle. “The Spirit Of Unity, A Discomforting Comforter, Some Reflections On The Holy Spirit, Ecumenism And The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements *The Ecumenical Review* [42 no 3-4 J1-O 1990], p 279-287

¹⁸⁷ Shane Clifton. “Ecumenism from the Bottom-up: A Pentecostal Perspective” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* [47:4 Fall 2012], 577

rooted in empirical data that remains congruent with Pentecostal Theology. It is important that the idiosyncrasies of Pentecostalism not be done away with in light of its blossoming global appeal, simply because of insufficient attention paid to its method of intellectual doctrine.

What we think, impacts what we do and what we do, determines how we are perceived. It then becomes critical that we gain an understanding of how we think in terms of arriving at a destination of conscience-settled thought. Or are we settling for a position that is more conciliatory in order to avoid the stereotypical commentary of non-sympathizers. Ultimately, there will need to be a reckoning of avoidance-based comfort with faithfulness to the Pentecostal method of reflection. Much of what we are unpacking falls in the domain of a practical approach to Pentecostal theology. Mark Cartledge writes in regards to practical theology, “there is an agreed-on common focus or direct object of inquiry, namely, contemporary religious praxis; that is, the value-laden practices of ecclesial and religious communities in global contexts.”¹⁸⁸ What is key here is the value we attach to particular practices. Why does one particular practice carry value over another or more importantly, how does a practice develop religious value?

Accordingly, the more specific exercise of reflecting on how Pentecostalism is practiced in the Bahamas and what is given value in that context evolves into the praxis of this religious movement. This in turn becomes the backdrop of the search

¹⁸⁸ Allan Anderson. *Studying global Pentecostalism: Theories and methods* [Berkeley, 2010], 270

for a pattern or sequence that may fit the idea of a reproducible method when it comes to taking a position on complex issues. I agree with Dr. Cartledge in noting; for the model to be developed, research must show a sufficient level of agreement in order for it to be considered a theological practice. This point becomes important when considering the data pool and the interpretation of that data. Taking into account the data this project hopes to obtain, it becomes vital that a historical reflection of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas be undertaken to serve as a baseline point of reference and interpretation.

4.2 Quantitative Study on Gambling Results

4.2.1 Introduction to questions on Gambling

In formulating the questions for this quantitative survey it was important to make direct inquiries to address the information being sought in a way that was clear and unambiguous to the participant. The questions were designed to get at the participants sources of ethics and their position on gambling in order to determine their ethical outlook on the same. The same survey questions will be given to each of the participating denominations in order to provide an overview of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas.

The context of this research will take place in the Bahamas where the Pentecostal sparks began in the early 1900's and continues to this day representing approximately 57% of all Renewalists; A term used to describe the grouping of

Charismatics, Neocharismatics, and Pentecostals¹⁸⁹ It is interesting that only a limited amount of scholarship in this area has come from the Bahamas even though it was one of the early successful mission endeavors outside the United States in the wake of the Azusa Street Revival.¹⁹⁰

The three largest groupings of Pentecostals in the Bahamas from which data will be drawn include The Church of God of Prophecy, The Assemblies of God and the Church God. Three churches from each denomination were selected as follows: The largest congregation within each denomination and the first two favorable responses to participating in the research, from churches listed in the phone book.

4.2.2 Analysis of Data from Questions on Gambling

The question was asked in the form of a statement “ I believe gambling is a sin.” Responses from all three Pentecostal denominations show more than 70% agree with this statement in similar proportions. In terms of age groups, there was a notable difference with the 61+ age group, responding in agreement by 80% compared to the other age groups hovering around 70% in agreement with the statement. In terms of gender, females appeared to be more strongly in agreement with this statement compared to males [see Table 1.]

¹⁸⁹ Stanley M. Burgess, Eduard M. Van Der Maas *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* [Zondervan Grand Rapids, 2003] 29-30

¹⁹⁰ Christopher Moree “Pentecostalism in the Bahamas” *History and Heritage* [Church of God Summer/Fall 1999], 1-11

The next statement, I believe gambling is ok as an amusement found the genders fairly similar in disagreement with approximately 65% of the men and 70% of the women disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. As far as age groups, there wasn't much variation either with all brackets disagreeing or disagreeing strongly from the mid 60% to 70%. Among the denominations we find a similar pattern except it can be noted that the Assemblies of God had an approximate 10% higher strongly disagreeing with statement over the other two denominations, 43.46% compared to 33.13% and 34,51% for the Church of God of Prophecy and Church of God respectively. See table 2.

On the statement, "I believe gambling encourages a poor work ethic," responses indicate a heavy agreement with this statement. There was practically the same level of agreement between males and females, among the various age groups, and among denominations. There is a strong feeling among Pentecostals that Gambling encourages a poor work ethic. See Table 3.

Similar responses come from the statement "I believe gambling is a social problem." With the majority of responses either agree or strongly agree with this statement across the board. See Table 4.

With the question "I believe gambling should not concern the church" again we find a similar response with the majority disagreeing with this statement and no significant variations between the genders, age groups or denominations. See Table 5.

On the statement “I would accept donations into my church from gambling enterprises the responses showed a higher level of uncertainty when compared to those who agree or strongly agree. In terms of gender, the females had a significant amount of uncertainty, which was more than the ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ combined. There was also more ‘uncertainty’ compared to males. As far as age groups the 18-30 category had the highest level of uncertainty with 23.71%, and the lowest level of strongly disagreeing with 28.87%. The 31-40 age group was practically the reverse in that they had the lowest level of uncertainty with regards to accepting donations into the church from gambling enterprises with 12.68% and the highest level of strongly disagreeing with 46.48%. Among the denominations, The Assemblies of God appear to be the furthest in the direction of not accepting donations from Gambling enterprises followed by the Church of God of Prophecy. The Church of God appears to be more in the direction of accepting donations from gambling enterprises as they had 33.64 % agree and strongly agree combined, compared with 19.49 % with Church of God of Prophecy and 12.44% with Assemblies of God. See table 6.

The next question asks if the participant would accept a scholarship from a web shop. Here we also find a large amount of uncertainty but still the direction is more towards not accepting the scholarship. The exception to this is within the 18-30 age group where we find the highest level of uncertainty, 33.33% with the next highest being the 31-40 age group with 20% then the 41-50 age group comes in at, 12.77% the 51-60 age group at 16.36% and the 61+ age group at 12.82%. Also it should be

noted that the 18-30 age group was generally in the opposite direction of all the other categories of gender, age and denomination. They responded to this question in favor of accepting a scholarship from the web-shop. See Table 7.

On the statement “I would buy a lottery ticket” the responses appeared to be more towards not doing so in all 3 category of comparisons; gender, age grouping, and denomination. However it should be noted that the Assemblies God displayed the highest level of strongly disagree compared to the other organizations. 45.50% compared to 35.85% for Church of God of Prophecy and 30.1% for Church of God. See Table 8.

The question of whether or not respondents would accept a medical loan from a web-shop owner the findings are as follows: there is a high degree of uncertainty among the males; 27.42%, with an equal amount of males agreeing with the statement as those who disagree at 20%. Among the denominations, the church of God of Prophecy had the highest amount of uncertainty compared to the other denominations. In addition, the highest response to any of the opinions within this denomination was “uncertainty.” The church of God appeared almost split on either side of the question but slightly more responses were for not accepting the loan, however their highest single response rate was “agree” to accepting the medical loan. As far as age goes, the 18-30 bracket had the highest response of uncertainty concerning this question: A difference of 14-17% higher than the other age groupings. See Table 9.

The next question, “I believe the Bible teaches against gambling” showed an overwhelming agreement with this statement in similar proportions across gender,

denominations and age grouping. However the highest amount of uncertainty was among the 18-30 age group at 25%. See Table 10.

The question “I believe a gambling parent can negatively impact on the family unit” showed a clear direction across all categories being compared: overwhelmingly the responses were ‘strongly agree’ by margins of 61.04% to 76.47%. See Table 11.

The next statement is, “I used the Bible to determine my moral position on gambling.” The majority of responses among the denominations were in agreement with this statement. The 18-30 age group had the highest uncertain response of 18.48%. In comparing the genders, they both had a heavy leaning towards agreeing with this statement. See Table 12.

4.2.3 Conclusions from questions on gambling

In analyzing the responses to the questions related to gambling we get a solid representation of the Pentecostal community in the Bahamas. There is a general view that gambling is a sin and as such it is not even acceptable to engage in the practice as mere amusement based on the responses given to the question of whether or not it is ok to engage in gambling as a simple amusement. The preponderance of responses in this particular direction suggests a relatively clear understanding on the part of Bahamian Pentecostals, of what sin is. But for those non-Pentecostal Christians and the minority Pentecostals who believe gambling is not a sin, then perhaps their understanding of sin may be different. This possible variation is the reason the question was asked in a different way further down in the questionnaire. The question was, “I used my Bible to determine my moral position on gambling and the responses were similarly in agreement across the categories

compared. This suggests that the Bible is central to the Pentecostal's definitions of sin and morality. Accordingly, it would be appropriate to bring to the fore, some reflection on the meaning of sin. T. Wayne Dye writes, "Scripture talks about a definite standard or ideal and says that falling short of that mark is sin. Jesus makes it clear that the standard is whole-hearted love for God, and love for one's neighbor as one's self."¹⁹¹ So we can infer from Dye's summation of sin that Pentecostals in the Bahamas, because of the centrality of the Bible in terms of defining sin in their worldview, see gambling as missing the mark of God's standards.

Some of the ways it tends to miss the mark include the attitude towards the job environment. It is an accepted by-product of gambling that it generally encourages a poor work ethic and the survey concurs with this assumption. It is further suggested that gambling can have other negative effects as well such as on the family unit. This is demonstrated in a poignant way by the overwhelming indication of responses indicating agreement with the negative impact of gambling on the family unit.

On the flip side, it is necessary to see what boundaries Pentecostals have to the positive aspects of gambling and how far they would allow these boundaries to be pushed to influence their view on the subject. For example, the question was asked if the participants would accept a scholarship from gambling related enterprises. The responses were interesting in that there appears to be a going against the tide with the '18-30' age group who generally said they would accept the scholarship. This particular set of responses by this age group would include the individuals who

¹⁹¹ T. Wayne Dye, Toward a Cross-Cultural definition of sin, *Missiology*, 1 January, 1976 p. 29

would be very interested in pursuing a college education. So this suggests that for this particular demographic they are ok with accepting a scholarship because it is something good and can benefit them and perhaps others as well. So then, it seems as if the question moves more towards the ethical realm as opposed to the moral side of things because if they truly thought gambling was a sin then they should similarly not accept a scholarship from this 'sinful' organization. But rather we see a sort of teleological ethic as well as a utilitarian ethic being played out in these responses. In other words, since the end result is something good and the result benefits several people then ethics says its ok.

When it comes to accepting donations into the church from gambling enterprises the general consensus is no but a high level of uncertainty was received from Church of God and Church of God of Prophecy respondents and a much lower amount with Assemblies of God. See Table 6. And it should further be noted that within the Church of God, there was a higher amount of 'agree' responses compared to 'disagree' All three denominations gave the highest response overall to the 'strongly disagree' check box but for the Assemblies of God, this margin was much greater than the others: 48.8% compared to 30.82% with Church of God of Prophecy and 25.45% with Church of God. This pattern is showing a more conservative leaning of the Assemblies of God on the gambling issue compared to the other denominations. From this observation it could be extrapolated to expect the Assemblies of God to be more strict in their worldview of seeing gambling as going against the Biblical principles. When we look at the question of whether or not gambling is a sin, again

the Assemblies of God had the highest response rate in agreeing with this statement over the other denominations. The same occurs with whether gambling is ok as an amusement, The Assemblies of God had the highest level of disagreement with this statement compared to the other denominations. The same pattern is seen with the other gambling related questions: "I believe gambling is a social problem," "I believe gambling should not concern the church," "I would accept donations into my church from gambling enterprises, "I would accept a scholarship from a web-shop." This pattern provides sufficient support for the conclusion that the Assemblies of God Pentecostals in the Bahamas are more conservative than the other denominations.

4.2.4 Significance of Conclusions

These conclusions drawn give us a clearer picture of the Pentecostal climate in the Bahamas as it relates to the issue of Gambling. The importance of these findings is crucial in determining how Pentecostals in the Bahamas define themselves nowadays and would also serve as a good measuring tool to compare with the Pentecostal position of other Caribbean countries and then to the global Pentecostal movement.

4.3 Qualitative Study on Gambling Results

4.3.1 Focus Group Summary on Gambling

The Assemblies of God gave the following responses when asked about how they would form their opinion on gambling: Participant F2 "...because there was an application from scripture by my pastor I have a settled view that gambling should not be done. The illustration given by my pastor was to not put our trust in the gods

of lady luck and fate. Gad and Meni [false gods mentioned in Isaiah 65:11]. Gathering from this response it would appear that the individual was perhaps somewhat unsure or unclear about which direction to take concerning the controversy of gambling prior to it being formally addressed by the pastor. Further, it seems that the pastor's evaluation of the issue weighed heavily on the participants view because the statement was made, "I have a settled view that gambling should not be done." Another response was from Participant M1, "The Bible doesn't directly speak to it but the principles are in the Bible that supports the position you should take i.e. the love of getting a quick buck and not working hard; leaving things to chance. The Bible gives us direction on the issue." This participant touches precisely on the challenge of this investigation; there is no direct mention of gambling in the Bible. So how do those who rely on the Bible form their ethical opinions? The participant addresses this issue by indicating that there is sufficient circumstantial advice within the Bible that would be able to give the needed direction on the controversy. Participant F2 gives a parallel challenge, "...For example the Bible does not say specifically "do not beat your wife" but there are principles that guide us to not do this." So this presents a parallel precedent for how the Bible addresses issues that are not specifically mentioned in the text. Participant F1, "It's when we go outside the principles of God that we reap consequences. By the sweat of your brow you shall eat." This participant suggests that the idea of gambling is to use this activity as a means to make financial gains, but that this idea is in contravention to the principle of hard work as put forth by the scripture.

As far as accepting a scholarship from a gambling enterprise Participant “F2 if you establish the principles and say that gambling is not right would you accept a scholarship? The wealth of the wicked is laid up for the righteous.” So the suggestion is that the ends of the proceeds, if it presents a good opportunity, should be ok to accept, notwithstanding the means of the funds being of an unacceptable status. Participant F3 “I believe if I am a child of God I believe God would provide the means for me to school my child without having to go to questionable sources that tend to destroy lives.” So we have a challenging viewpoint that leans to more of a total dependence on God for providing means of financial support without having to go to sources that are not accepted by the Bible.

In terms of accepting a medical loan from one of these gambling enterprises M2 says, “...in the case of a medical loan I would take it because if its intention is desperate/survival...if my mother needed surgery, I would take it because I don’t have it.” So again we are seeing a position taken that if the end result is something good then it is ok to accept the medical loan despite the unfavorable means the enterprise used to obtain the funds to begin with.

Turning to the Church of God, the following responses were given when asked their thoughts about gambling. Participant F2, “I don’t believe in it.” This individual gave a straight out opinion without hesitation. There did not appear to be any area of uncertainty but that this was their stance. Participant F3 says, “The lilies and birds don’t toil and spin yet God provides for them.” So the idea being presented by this participant is that if God can provide for the flowers and birds, how much more

would he provide for us, his children. There is a strong spiritual leaning in this response that we as Pentecostals ought to trust God more for what we need.

Participant F3 continues, “In gambling someone has to lose in order for someone to win. Nothing is good about gambling because you may become addicted and lead yourself down the negative road.” So here this individual is listing some of the major negatives from their perspective that comes along with gambling. Firstly, someone has to lose in order for you to win. The idea here is how does your conscience feel knowing you are doing something that inevitably will cause someone to become a loser of their earnings. It is not consistent with the principles of Christianity to love your neighbor as yourself. Or put another way, we ought to do unto others as we would want them to do unto us. The other negative is the addiction aspect of gambling; it creates a craving that keeps you tethered to a path of negativity and loss. So Participant F3 sees no good in gambling at all. Participant F1 says, “there was a story I heard that a mother was so addicted such that she skipped work and eventually lost her job and family, so I don’t recommend it.” So we have anecdotal evidence in the lap of this participant of an actual addictive case that got so bad that the mother, who was the gambler, became so hooked on the activity of gambling that it took over the normal cognitive and reasoning skills that would have prompted her to discontinue the practice. The consequences of this addiction were devastating in that both her job and family were lost in the process.

There is an interesting response from Participant F2, “There is no biblical scripture that says it is wrong, nothing explicit. I don’t think it is a sin. I’m against it for the negative reasons. I don’t think it’s wrong if you can afford it? This participant is

looking at gambling from a less spiritual perspective due to there being no direct biblical expression that says gambling is wrong. Instead the ethic environment is engaged to produce a position that is supported. For example, the Participant says they are against gambling because of the negative effects that are commonly associated with this activity but leaves a window open to those who have sufficient disposable income to engage in gambling, then its ok. This Participant was asked if they engage in gambling and the reply was, "Not in Nassau!" This response indicates that Participant F2 sees no issue with gambling if the person engaging in the practice could afford the activity, and that the Participant belongs to the category of those who could afford to gamble and has, and perhaps will continue to gamble. It is noted that this practice however, is not done locally but abroad. Gambling abroad indicates several things: Participant F2 is perhaps afraid of being seen engaging in the practice of gambling by persons who may know him, and as such may indicate whether or not they really think there is nothing wrong with the activity; secondly, the Participant says "I am against it for the negative reasons," and so may not wish to appear hypocritical and thus prefers to engage in the practice abroad.

Participant M1 says, "From a social standpoint my objection is from the culture of something for nothing. It leads to more social decay and problems, especially if the individual can't control himself or herself, such that they waste away their earnings." Participant M1 is also leaning on the ethics environment to evaluate the question of gambling. It would seem that this participant is applying the deontological approach to ethics by indicating that the practice itself is wrong because it is based on getting something for nothing, rather than working for what

you want to have. Participant F3 says, “ It’s about greed.” It is suggested here that the practice of gambling is about making gains that you didn’t work for so that you can accumulate stuff beyond your capacity to produce. Participant F3 further says, “gambling falls under idolatry which is a sin.” So again we see a leaning toward the spiritual direction in determining the position on gambling.

With The Church of God of Prophecy the focus group was asked, “Do you think Gambling is a sin?”

There was a general reluctance from the group to say it is a sin and deferred to scenarios where an ethical judgment would be required. This response by the group in resisting making a definitive statement that gambling is a sin possibly stems from the lack of a direct mentioning of this issue in the Bible. This seems to be the reason [F2] says that society would ask what is the scriptural support for this position. It appears that this particular approach is centered around the ability to defend the position that is taken, relative to gambling hence the need for support from the Scriptures.

[This avoidance response is consistent with the larger amount of persons in the “uncertain category” [18%] in the survey]

Interestingly, there were sighs of surprise [in the direction of the percentage being larger than expected] when the percentage of uncertainty was mentioned. This response of surprise indicates a disconnect from the opinions of their fellow members and that perhaps they themselves were unaware how many other persons felt the same as those who responded positively for this category. The sighs were

perhaps a further indication of surprise regarding the numbers of persons whose apparent incongruence with the official position of the church against gambling was tangibly expressed.

4.3.2 Conclusions from Focus Group discussion on Gambling

The Participants were keenly aware of the fact that the Bible does not directly address the issue of Gambling and as such were well aware of the ethical challenge to take a position on the matter. However, they gave the impression that it was actually necessary to have an opinion on the matter and not remain ambiguous. This impression is based on the eagerness of participants to find the appropriate pathway through this controversial issue. One Participant from the Church of God of Prophecy focus group indicated that it was important to have a defensible position where scriptural support could be given. There was a keen dependence on the pastoral leadership of the church to provide guidance and scriptural support for his stance, coming from the Assemblies of God focus group, and it seems that once a pastoral position was in place, then the participants felt more at ease to give their opinion. An interesting observation about the limits of the morality among the participants in terms of the ideal and the practical: Ideally, they are inclined to avoid anything related to gambling enterprises because of the negativity associated with the activity but when it came down to a personal need that could be met by proceeds coming from this controversial source, it caused a deeper reflection on the issue and search of the scriptures to find support for doing so. For example the issues of accepting a scholarship or accepting a medical loan caused a deeper

consideration and a perhaps expanded drawing of the ethical boundaries being practiced. There was an observable shift towards the ethical model of consequentialism where the consequences of the action produces good or benefit as opposed to not accepting the financial help that could lead to dire consequences such as a loss of an educational opportunity and consequently, potential loss of ability to produce a preferred income. In the case of a medical loan the family member or as mentioned by Participant M2 from the Assemblies of God, the mother may die as a result because of the urgency of the circumstances and perhaps not having enough time to find an alternative source of funds for the needed surgery. So in the wake of little biblical support, here was a sense of leaning away from the spiritual side of things towards the ethical realm for the Church of God focus group because they seemed to be willing to accept in part that since there was no definitive scripture against gambling then it should be viewed in terms of whether or not an individual has the financial capacity to engage such a practice. However there was an awareness of the negative aspects of this activity and on the basis of those negative aspects it would be considered inappropriate and unadvisable.

4.3.3 Comparisons with Quantitative Data

In looking at the data received from the survey and comparing it to the focus groups, there was a consistency noted in terms of comparable expressions made by participants in the focus groups. The opportunity to elaborate on particular questions or related expressions in general allowed for a wider body of information to be developed in terms of getting a better picture of what Pentecostalism looks

like in the Bahamas. In terms of the pattern noted from the survey data it was demonstrated that the Assemblies of God appeared to be more towards the conservative side of the issue when compared to the Church of God of Prophecy who seemed to be in the middle and the Church of God who reflected a tendency towards a more liberal view of gambling. This was further established during the discussions when the focus group from the Church of God indicated that they felt Gambling was not a sin because there was no direct scriptural reference that condemned the practice. Further to this, an individual expressed his view that he didn't have a problem with gambling if the individual involved had the means to sustain the activity. In addition, this participant went as far as implying that they actually participate in gambling and this revelation did not draw any significant attention in terms of a gasp or a chastising look, for so doing from his peers in the focus group. There was a surprise noted from the Church of God of Prophecy focus group when they learned of the level of uncertainty among the respondents who took the survey; 15.67%, which was the highest level among all the denominations. The amount of doubt about the question of whether or not gambling was a sin was a revealing moment that perhaps the message of the official position of the church was not getting across in sufficient strength to make these persons feel sufficiently comfortable to give a definitive opinion along official church lines.

4.3.4 Comparisons with Literature

As we consider the findings of the survey conducted along with that of the focus groups discussions, we discover the positioning of Bahamian Pentecostals along the spectrum of ethics intermingled with opinion and feelings that stem from perhaps

more than one authoritative source. Nonetheless, there will usually be found in some form or another, the influence of the Bible as a major presence in the whole process. Gambling has always been a controversial hot topic no matter where in the world the question is asked. John Cox writes, “among evangelical Christians, gambling is often understood as wasteful entertainment and even as an irresponsible vice.”¹⁹² This statement rings true in this particular context as well in that there is a general view of gambling as not something to be emulated or pursued but rather something to be avoided. This sentiment was found in the survey conducted in the Bahamas, as well as the focus group discussions. Grace Lee et al. writes, “...excessive gambling can lead to the development of pathological gambling, which is associated with many adverse outcomes including financial, interpersonal, criminal, academic, and psychiatric problems.”¹⁹³ Again these symptoms mentioned by Grace Lee have been identified to some degree by the focus group discussions. Accordingly, the longstanding view of gambling producing negative side effects is corroborated in this research. It is noted from the focus group discussions that there were accounts of gambling circumstances leading to other problems. Frederic Dussault writes, “Various studies identified a co-occurrence of gambling problems (i.e., problems resulting from gambling) and depressive symptoms in adolescents

¹⁹² John Cox, Fast money schemes are risky business: gamblers and investors in a Papua New Guinean Ponzi scheme, *Oceania* Vol. 84 Iss. 3 Nov. 2014, p. 289-305

¹⁹³ Grace Lee; Lilian, Ghandour; Alaa Takache; Silvia Martins, Investigating the association between strategic and pathological gambling behaviors and substance use in youth: Could religious faith play a differential role? *The American Journal on Addictions*, 2014, Vol.23(3), pp.280-7

and adults alike.”¹⁹⁴ These findings concur with the account of the mother who lost her family and job as a result of the gambling. It can be assumed that there were some issues of depression and compulsive behaviors involved in the scenario.

When the approach in determining where a participant or respondent will rest his or her opinion is examined, the findings reveal an oscillation of genres to suit the particular mindset of the research subject. Sometimes it will be approached from a spiritual perspective where the Bible is used as the key engine starter in driving the particular argument or stance. Other times it may be from the realm of ethics, where it is more easily explained. Sometimes we may even see a merging of the two such that it may not be readily distinguishable. This difference can be confusing at times but Scot Rae brings clarity to these approaches, when he says: “morality refers to the actual content of right and wrong and ethics refers to the process of determining right and wrong...Morality ultimately issues from the character of God.”¹⁹⁵ It is agreed that morality then is a subset of virtues, character traits, practices and attributes that stems from the Divine as revealed in the Bible and through nature. But this subset though inextricably linked to God, has the capacity to stand alone as an autonomous entity. This ability for morality to function in this way allows individuals and groups to adhere to morals without necessarily

¹⁹⁴ Frederick Dussault; Mara Brendgen, Frank Vitaro; Brigitte Wanner; Richard Trembly, Longitudinal links between impulsivity, gambling problems and depressive symptoms: a transactional model from adolescence to early adulthood, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 2011, Vol.52(2), p.130-138

¹⁹⁵ Scott B. Rae, *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics* Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2009

acknowledging God or Christianity. This waiver grants a universal quality to morality and allows other cultures and religions to incorporate its standards without adjusting their particular worldview to any great extent. The importance of this waiver comes to bear when considering other sources from which Pentecostals may draw their ethical construct. They may not necessarily be Christian sources or entities that declare any allegiance to God, but they possess a level of morality that resonates with the Pentecostal's inner convictions.

Christiane Poulin writes, "The public health perspective on gambling is that it is a behaviour in which people have indulged for millenia, that there are both potential benefits and harms to individuals and communities arising from gambling activities and that the general stance toward gambling should be one of harm reduction."¹⁹⁶ I agree with Poulin's summation of the chronic nature of gambling and that there are both benefits and harms associated with this practice. Of course Poulin is speaking from a public health perspective and so It would appear that since this activity has been going on for such a long time it would be impractical or impossible to eliminate it from society. Accordingly, the approach to addressing the issue is simply one of harm reduction. This approach is understood within the parameters available, however I think the value of religion in aiding public health issues like gambling is perhaps overlooked or not even considered because of a political climate that encourages the separation of religious practice from other aspects of community existence. Nonetheless, I think that to fully reduce the negative effects associated

¹⁹⁶ Christiane Poulin, Gambling, Canadian Medical Association Journal, 07 November 2006, Vol.175(10), pp.1208

with this practice is simply not to participate and to encourage a shunning of gambling. I agree that it is probably highly unlikely that the practice could be eliminated from the society but I do believe it can be controlled or minimized in small segments. This is where the church environment comes into the picture. The lifestyle of Pentecostalism that guide what adherents participate and sanction can be greatly influenced by their overarching worldview. And if gambling is presented as going against biblical principles, then there would be an effect on the number of Pentecostals engaging this activity. The challenge then becomes, how can the Christian churches discourage gambling within a community without being seen as forcing a particular brand of religion upon said community. It would follow that enlisting a review of the morality of gambling in terms of the principles that do not agree with the negative results of this activity, combined with a search for the ethics that produces the highest good for all people would be a good starting place.

4.4 Conclusions on Gambling

It is fairly easy to conclude that gambling is a controversial subject because of its numerous negative spin-offs associated with the activity. When it comes to lifestyle practices of Pentecostals in this context, the research demonstrates that gambling is generally considered to be something that should be avoided. The varying degrees of opinion towards that end, as discovered in the qualitative analysis, is in a state of flux in part, because of the lack of definitive presentations from authoritative sources that would navigate this controversy. The place where Pentecostals get their morals and ethics from will in large part determine the outcome of their

decision on this and other, hot topic issues. That being said, the issue of gambling is actively being discussed throughout the Bahamas and as such it was selected as an appropriate topic to evaluate the ethical make up of the Pentecostal population. The evaluation of the state of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas in terms of this controversy was revelatory in that it was discovered that issues that affect the society need to have a means of positive navigation through the dilemma and not divorce their opportunity to have a beneficial impact on the community as well. What is notable is the fact that Pentecostals in the Bahamas generally feel that gambling should concern the church. This draws a picture of the evolving organizational persona of social engagement the Pentecostal brand of Christianity is exhibiting in the Bahamas. Heretofore it was often said that there is a lack of appreciation for community involvement; that Pentecostals were too eschatologically minded to be concerned about issues that affect the communities in which they live.¹⁹⁷ But this appears to be changing among the three largest Pentecostal denominations in the Bahamas.

Ethical Reflection on the issue of gambling allowed a glimpse into some of the ethical boundaries that are present in the Bahamian Pentecostal population and the sources from where opinions and ideas were derived to form decisions. This alone however, would not be sufficient to build the type of ethical model that this thesis is seeking to present. Accordingly, it was important to select another subject that was being nationally discussed and possessed sufficient debate that would reveal the

¹⁹⁷ Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* University of California Press, Berkeley 2007

ethical boundaries and sources that participants engaged. So the next chapter will discuss the issue of same-sex marriage in order to achieve this ethical knowledge of the Pentecostals in the Bahamas.

5. Same-Sex Marriage as a challenge for Local Pentecostals

5.1 Study From the Literature

5.1.1 Context

The Bahamas is well known to tourists as a destination offering the delights of tropical weather filled with sun-kissed days and moonlit evenings in a warm and welcoming collection of smiling faces offering world class service and hospitality like no other. The population according to “worldometers” is 397,854 and the median age is 32.9 years.¹⁹⁸ The total land area is 3,865 sq. miles. The population consists of 85% African descent, 12% European, 3% Asian and 3% Latin American. Within this largest ethnic group approximately 80,000 are Haitians and within the European segment approximately 17,000 are whites.¹⁹⁹

Coming along with the numerous tourists, some 6,136,159 for 2017,²⁰⁰ that visit the shores of this archipelagic nation of some 700 islands are the cultures and ideas and philosophies from these parts of the world. So it is expected for the country to be exposed to issues that are foreign to its historic way of life. The way in which these issues are faced, will depend upon existing moral structures and ethics that operate among the various segments of the society.

¹⁹⁸ worldometers.com [accessed 19 February, 2018]

¹⁹⁹ worldpopulationreview.com [accessed 19 February, 2018]

²⁰⁰ Tourismtoday.com [accessed 20 February2018]

5.1.2 History of development of the issue

In 1979, the United Nations Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women [CEDAW]. To this end, countries that sign on to this convention have an obligation to enact measures necessary to ensure that all forms of discrimination are removed against women in the respective state.²⁰¹ In 1993 the Bahamas acceded to this convention and as such became bound to move forward with implementing these measures.²⁰²

Around the world there has been much publicity in the news media regarding countries that have moved to legalize same-sex marriage within their respective borders and allow the same rights afforded heterosexual couples to be available to homosexual couples. With this wave of liberality towards alternative lifestyles, in particular homosexuality, an apprehensive mood has developed in the national conversation of the Bahamas that has heightened the awareness of this agenda among the population. Human rights lawyer and President of the Grand Bahama human rights Association Fred Smith says, “ the view that the referendum would pave the way for same-sex marriage was a damaging myth that displayed a fundamental misunderstanding of the law.

He explained that Article 15 of the Constitution already protected individuals from discrimination on the basis of sex, and as a result, a legal path to same-sex unions

²⁰¹ un.org Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 [accessed 20 February,2018]

²⁰² Elcott Coleby, Speech On The Four Referendum Bills Delivered By Former Bahamas Attorney General And Chief Justice On 10 May 2016, Bahamas Information Services, Nassau 10 May, 2016

was already present.”²⁰³ These remarks became a wake-up call to the citizenry of the Bahamas that they needed to pay more attention to what was taking place in the country. In particular on an issue that they assumed would not even come to the table.

According to US News, “As of December 2017, 29 countries had officially legalized same-sex marriage nationwide or in some regions.”²⁰⁴ In the year 2000, the Netherlands was the first country to pass laws to that effect. And since that time there has been continued movement in this direction from a political standpoint. In April 2016, the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas launched a ‘Yes Bahamas Campaign’ ahead of a national referendum on gender equality to encourage the public to accept four proposed amendments to the constitution. They are as follows:

Bill 1: Approval of alteration to Article 8 and the repeal of Article 9 of the Constitution.

Do you approve of The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2014?

Under the proposed change to the Constitution, a child born outside of The Bahamas would, after the coming into operation of this amendment, become a Bahamian citizen at birth if either its mother or father is a citizen of The Bahamas by birth.

Bill 2: Approval of alteration to Article 10 of the Constitution.

Do you approve of The Constitution (Amendment) (No 2) Bill, 2014?

Under this proposed change to the Constitution, the foreign spouse of a Bahamian citizen would, after the coming into operation of this Article, be entitled to apply for and obtain citizenship subject to satisfying:

(i) existing national security or public policy considerations; and

(ii) new provisions guarding against marriages of convenience.

Bill 3: Approval of alteration to Article 14 of the Constitution.

Do you approve of The Constitution (Amendment) (No 3) Bill, 2014?

Under this proposed change to the Constitution, a Bahamian father of a person born out wedlock after the coming into operation of this amendment would be able to pass his citizenship to that person subject to legal proof that he is the father.

²⁰³ Ava Turnquest, Same-Sex marriage is already Constitutional, Tribune242 28 April, 2016 [accessed 20 February, 2018]

²⁰⁴ Megan Trimble, Same-sex marriage legalization by country, usnews.com, 7 November, 2017 [accessed 19, February, 2018]

Bill 4: Approval of alteration to Article 26 of the Constitution.
Do you approve of The Constitution (Amendment) (No 4) Bill, 2014?
Under this proposed change to the Constitution, it would be unlawful to discriminate based on “sex”, which would be defined as “being male or female”²⁰⁵.

The first three amendments deal with issues relating to citizenship, however the fourth amendment is specifically related to discrimination based on sex. It is this fourth amendment that set off a firestorm of debate within the country because it was viewed as the precursor to permitting same-sex marriages to be legal in the Bahamas. Being aware of this public outcry, the Prime Minister made the following remarks during the launch of the ‘Yes Bahamas Campaign’ on April 10, 2016.

“There have been some questions about the intent and the possible effects of this change. The purpose of this amendment is *only* to ensure that Bahamian men and women are equal under the law.

I am going to emphasize that in The Bahamas, by *law* – under the Matrimonial Causes Act -- marriage must be between a man and a woman, and this amendment *will not change that*.

In fact, the lawyers who drafted the language of the amendment went out of their way to protect traditional marriage, by defining “sex” as meaning “male or female”. The language is clear, and the intent of Parliament – which any future court is likewise obliged to consider – is also crystal clear.

And I am advised that there have been NO cases in Commonwealth countries like ours, with a Westminster-style Constitution, in which the right to non-discrimination on the basis of sex led to a judicially-created right to same-sex marriage.

I repeat: this referendum will not cause same-sex marriage to become legal in The Bahamas. Marriage in The Bahamas will be legal only if it is between a man and a woman, and male and female are determined at birth.”²⁰⁶

The efforts of the Prime Minister to assuage the fears of the general public regarding the widely held opinion that this fourth amendment is actually a possible back door approach to allowing same-sex marriage in the Bahamas did not seem to have much impact. This is understandable because the possibility still exists that an argument

²⁰⁵ Krisna Virgil, Yes To Equality: Parliament Approves Gender Referendum, Tribune242, 3 March, 2016[accessed 20 February, 2018]

²⁰⁶ Bahamas.gov.bs [accessed 20 February, 2018]

could be made in the direction of allowing same-sex marriage: Considering the Constitution of the Bahamas being the highest law of the country, it overrides any other laws that exist or will ever be enacted by parliament. The Matrimonial Causes Act as mentioned by The Prime Minister says that marriage must be between a man and a woman. The argument could be put forth that the Matrimonial Causes Act itself is discriminatory in that it prevents women from having the right to be married simply because she has chosen another female as her partner. In addition, if it is found that the Matrimonial Causes Act is in fact discriminatory, then the Constitution, as the Supreme Law of the Country would nullify this other law, namely the Matrimonial Causes Act. The floodgates would then be open to same-sex marriage. It was in part due to these concerns that the referendum on gender equality seemingly failed to pass in overwhelming numbers.

5.1.3 Analysis of Significance

The issue of Same-Sex marriage is a topic that cuts to the heart of how the society exists and how it will function in the future. It is an attempt to allow a segment of society the freedom to do what previously was forbidden. However to do this it must garner sufficient support to warrant a change in the laws of the land and legitimize this alternative lifestyle. To do such a change is to alter the longstanding definition of marriage as defined by the Bible along with orthodox cultural practices in this regard, and change the morality of a nation. The National Association of Evangelicals defines marriage as follows: “God designed marriage for humanity. As first described in Genesis and later affirmed by Jesus, marriage is a God-ordained, covenant relationship between a man and a woman. This lifelong, sexually exclusive

relationship brings children into the world and thus sustains the stewardship of the earth. Biblical marriage — marked by faithfulness, sacrificial love and joy — displays the relationship between God and his people.”²⁰⁷ Their stance is a reflection of the pushback against attempts to alter the morality of society and the family structure as designed by scriptural precedent.

A change at this level of society would have far reaching impacts on just about every quarter of the community. From Housing, employment and Religion. The challenge becomes one of identity for the Bahamas and how it wants to be viewed on the world stage. As far as religion, the Bahamas is a predominantly Christian nation with a history as a haven for religious refugees. From the early years of existence, The Puritans of Eleuthera sought refuge here because of the religious oppression they faced in England.²⁰⁸ As a result of this, religion has always played a significant role in the society in terms of morals and ethics. It becomes important to preserve this heritage of values and ethics if these societal institutions such as marriage and family life are viewed as sacred and not to be altered.

5.1.4 Implications for Pentecostals

Pentecostalism in the Bahamas is one that stems from the noted Azusa Street Revival of 1906 that led converts Edmund Barr along with his wife Rebecca Barr and later R.M. Evans to begin mission efforts in the Bahamas with this spirited

²⁰⁷ God Designed Marriage, National Association of Evangelicals 26 June, 2015 [accessed 20 February, 2018]

²⁰⁸ Stephen D. Glazier, *Encyclopedia of Global Religion: Bahamas*, 2012, p. 106-108

brand of Christianity. From that time, a close affinity to the Bible was part and parcel of the process of being Pentecostal as the Bible had the road map on how to connect with God and embrace the Spirit filled life on a daily basis. The Bible was central to their connection with God and way of being in the world. With the advancement of time there has come a sense of tug of war between worldly activities and secular ideas versus Christian activities and principles. With the onset of the national discourse surrounding same-sex marriage coming about due to a national referendum on gender equality, the Pentecostal community was somewhat forced to take a stand in order to preserve their freedom to practice Pentecostalism in the manner to which they were accustomed. In one sense, the rub of this moral and philosophical onslaught along with heightened ethical confrontation is actually good for the Pentecostal movement in that it would propel the leadership to consider being more proactive instead of reactive. Of course this necessitates a significant push from the members and followers of this tradition to embolden their respective leaders, otherwise the status quo would remain. But the effects would not just be seen in community issues but create an environment and mindset to take their tradition seriously enough to believe that it is worth taking a seat at the ecumenical table of global Christianity; to participate in the progression of Christianity and enhance their overall mission on the earth.

David Maxwell alludes to the fact that in the southern African context, Pentecostalism is making the kind of impact towards progressing the Christian perspective in ways that have been overlooked by scholarship. Hence the need for

more reflection in local settings that would solidify a body of work and provide resources to measure the global impact of Pentecostalism. Maxwell writes,

“The purpose of demonstrating the origins of southern African pentecostalism is not to make the now commonplace historical and anthropological critique of authenticity, although those pursuing a theological agenda which distinguishes African Independent Churches as a separate category of Christianity would do well to pay heed to that critique. Neither is it assumed that analysis of origins explains the meaning and appeal of different southern African pentecostal movements and denominations. Rather...that pentecostalism is a global phenomenon: a collection of vital and powerful idioms about illness and healing, evil and purity which make striking resonances with peoples sharing common historical experiences of marginalization from established religion and from the values of twentieth-century industrial capitalism. At the same time pentecostalism has also exhibited a remarkable capacity to localize itself, taking on very distinct meanings in different local contexts.”²⁰⁹

It is interesting that the same sorts of identifying features of Pentecostalism are found in different contexts that readily alert the observer that this is a Pentecostal entity. The description given by Maxwell concerning the African Pentecostals is easily transferable to the Bahamian context: This too can serve as a model for future involvement in ecumenical pursuits in that Pentecostalism has a unique ability to adapt to local environments and still remain globally distinctive because of the overarching traits of engaging the Bible in all circumstances related to lifestyle and practice. Even more telling perhaps, would be the ability to do this with issues demanding ethical patterns that could show a model for engaging complex challenges and questions that have no easy answer. So the importance of this thesis in researching the mechanisms and sources engaged in some repeatable fashion can

²⁰⁹ David Maxwell, *Historicizing Christian Independency: The Southern African Pentecostal Movement C. 1908–60*, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 40 Iss.[2], July. 1999 p. 243-264

be a similarly transferable template on the global stage within Pentecostal reflection.

5.1.5 Responses from church Leaders

The Assemblies of God gives the following statement,

“Increasing political and religious advocacy for homosexual practices, same-sex marriage, and alternate sexual identities has prompted us to clarify our position on these critical issues. We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our infallible guide (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Since the Bible does speak to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that the Church correctly understands and articulates what it actually teaches on these matters which have now become so controversial and divisive.

A reaffirmation of biblical teachings has become all the more urgent because writers sympathetic to the LGBT (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender) communities have advanced revisionist interpretations of relevant biblical texts that are based upon biased exegesis and mistranslation. In effect, they seek to set aside almost two thousand years of Christian biblical interpretation and ethical teachings...The Assemblies of God defines marriage as the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of one man and one woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. (Genesis 1:27–28; 2:18–24; Matthew 19:4–9; Mark 10:5–9; Ephesians 5:31–33).”²¹⁰

The Church of God of Prophecy issued the following:

“The Church of God of Prophecy believes that marriage is a lifelong institution, established by God, between a man and woman joined as husband and wife. By its very nature, marriage exists for the mutual love and support of spouses, for the procreation and training of children, and as a foundation for community. Marriage as an institution is important to the continuation of the human race and to the dignity, stability, and prosperity of the family unit and society.

Because the marital relationship offers these and many other benefits to the individual, society, and the church, we have clearly stated our position on the sanctity of the institution of marriage. We believe that it is one that must be preserved, protected, and promoted... Due to the departure of societies from Judeo-Christian values, the Church renounces biblically unlawful unions, such as same-sex, incestuous, or polygamous marriages, even if they are legal in the eyes of local, state, or national governments. Therefore, as we renounce the biblically unlawful unions

²¹⁰ Assemblies of God, Homosexuality, Marriage and Sexual Identity, 4-5 August, 2014, [Accessed 20 February, 2018]

as prescribed above, including same-sex marriage, ministers are not permitted to perform these marriages and churches are not to host these ceremonies.”²¹¹

The church of God put forth the following statement regarding same-sex marriage:

”The Church of God supports a definition of marriage that upholds the truth that sexual difference is a valuable characteristic of the marriage relationship and that the fundamental good of complementarity found in the union of a man and woman is essential for the well-being of the family. Abundant research acknowledges the equivalent significance of mothers and fathers to the healthy development of children. We defend an understanding of marriage that reflects centuries of common sense, biological reality, the Bible’s definition, the Judeo-Christian tradition and the wisdom, on this subject, of all the great religions. We sustain a position that argues for the welfare of children and the good of society. We affirm this statement based on two truths: the sacredness of marriage and the sinfulness of homosexuality.”²¹²

The statements from the three Pentecostal denominations involved in this research have all put forward a similarly Biblically based response that is reflected among the survey and focus group discussions of the members of the respective organizations. Accordingly, it was almost an automatic expectation that this response would be forthcoming. There is agreement on all levels of the church in this regard; leadership and laity.

5.1.6 Significance

The presentation of this issue that was driven by the agenda of the supporters of LGBT community created a positioning among the Pentecostals in the Bahamas that they were equally as committed to defending their lifestyle and environment with

²¹¹ Church of God of Prophecy, Statement Concerning Same-Sex Marriage, General Assembly 2006 [accessed 20 February, 2018]

²¹² Mark Williams, Church of God: Redefining marriage would negate marriage, Charisma News, 27 June, 2013 [accessed 20/02/2018]

an issue that perhaps is more definitively addressed in the Bible. This I believe weighed heavily on the noted uniformity of statements put out by the various leaders of the denominations. In particular the response of the Bahamian electorate in voting against the referendum on gender equality was an eye-opener because they were willing to deny themselves some other freedoms in order to prevent what was considered an attempt to breach a foundational core value of the society that existed from its inception. It is this resolve that speaks to the defining characteristics of the nation but also to its parts that make up the nation. Within the context of this research, Pentecostalism is viewed as creating its identity through voicing its opinions on matters of national importance though they may be controversial. It is necessary to have a cohesive support system of values practices and ethics that will allow future generations to make clear choices on whether they would like to become a part of the organization. This perhaps is part of the appeal of Pentecostalism as one of the fastest growing traditions²¹³: People can identify who they are and if that public persona fits with their particular experience then a connection is made.

²¹³ Brian Grim, Pentecostalism's Growth in Religiously Restrictive Environments, *Society*, Vol. 46, Iss. 6 (Nov 2009): 484-495.

5.2 Quantitative Study on Same-Sex Marriage Results

5.2.1 Introduction to Questions

The questions for this section of the survey dealing with same-sex marriage were designed to gauge the strength of the opinions of the respondents. Accordingly, they were given options that reflected agreement, strong agreement, uncertainty, disagreement or strong disagreement with the statements put forth. This method allows for a more detailed interpretation of the opinions as apposed to a simple yes or no response. Demographics were asked of participants in order to be able to separate responses based on age grouping, gender and denomination.

5.2.2 Analysis of Data from questions

Participants were asked their opinion on the following statement: “I believe that same-sex marriage is wrong” The responses were just about equal between the genders with 90% of the males strongly agreeing with the statement and 88% of the females strongly agreeing with the phrase. When we look at the age groupings we find a similar pattern; no notable variations but all age groups strongly agree with the statement. They ranged from 84% in 18-30 age group up to 96% in the 31-40 age grouping. In the category of the denominations again we find an overwhelming strong agreement with the statement. Ranging from 84% with Church of God, and 90% for both Church of God of Prophecy and the Assemblies of God. See Table 13. The next statement is, “I believe same-sex marriage does not affect one’s faith in God.” Among the denominations the respondents in large numbers strongly

disagree with this statement. 59.26% from the Church of God; 64.56% from the Church of God of Prophecy and 74.76% with the Assemblies of God. In terms of age group there was also a proportionate strongly disagree response ranging from 57.33% in the 61 plus age group to the highest number of respondents checking the strongly disagree box in the 31-40 age group with 74.63%. Interestingly, the highest number of 'not certain' responses was from the 18-30 age group with 10.1% the other age groups in this category ranged from 1.33% to 3.74% the younger age bracket appeared to have some question on this statement. In terms of gender they were fairly close to each other with 67.14% strongly disagree among the females and 69.57% among the males also strongly disagree. See Table 14.

The next statement is "I believe same-sex marriage is strictly a civil concern" See Table 15. The genders were fairly close on this question with the females coming in at 59.3% strongly disagree and the males at 56.2%. Among the age groups we find the highest uncertainty in the 18-30 age group with 15.46%, however all age categories still strongly disagree with the statement. Among the denominations, the Church of God had the highest level of agreement with this statement 18.45% compared with 11.61% with the Church of God of Prophecy and 9.62% with the Assemblies of God. This high level of agreement of Church of God membership is indicating a notable belief that same-sex marriage was strictly a civil concern. They also had the lowest level of disagreement with the statement compared with the other denominations. See Table 15.

The next question to analyze is, "I believe God frowns on homosexuality." Within the denominations there is a fairly close response of strongly agree with the statement. The church of God came in at 64.81% strongly agree, the Assemblies of God came in at a 68.54% strongly agree and the highest going to the Church of God of Prophecy at 71.97% strongly agree. The highest 'not certain' response came from the 18-30 and the 31-40 age group with 14% and 13% respectively. The response rate for 'not certain' within the age categories was 2.6% for the 61 plus group and 2.78% for the 41-50 age bracket. The 51-60 age group came in at 3.74% so the 18-30, and 31-40 were approximately 10 percentage points higher than their counterparts. See Table 16.

The next statement considered was "I believe same-sex marriage goes against the laws of nature." See Table 17. Comparing the genders there was just about equal response numbers for strongly agree with this statement, 77.59% for females and 78.52% for males. In the age groups the findings were strongly agree 71.72% for 18-30; 77.03% for 61 plus; the other three categories were all 80% response rate in strongly agree with the statement. In terms of denomination there was a standout with the Church of God having the lowest response for strongly agree compared to the other denominations. 67.62% compared to 80% Assemblies of God and 81.05% in the Church of God of Prophecy. See Table 17.

The next question is "I believe homosexuals choose to be homosexuals" From the denomination perspective the responses reveal a similar response rate in the strongly agree category with small differences among them. The Church of God of

Prophecy comes in at 57.79% followed by Assemblies of God 58.57% and then Church of God with 58.82% strongly agreeing with the statement. In terms of age group 50.52% of the 18-30 age group strongly agree with this statement followed by 58.82% in the 31-40 age group. The 41-50 group and the 61 plus group both come in at approximately 63%. As far as gender, the response was 49.63% for males who strongly agreed with the statement and 61.1% of the females strongly agreed that homosexuals choose to be homosexuals. See Table 18.

The following question was a rephrase of the previous question to see if there would be a significant difference in interpretation. "I don't believe homosexuals have a choice in their sexual orientation." See Table 19. In the gender comparison 41.22% of the males responded with strongly disagree and 48.94% of the females responded with a strongly disagree. It should be noted that 30.53% of the males disagree and 25.08% of the females disagree with this statement giving a combined disagreement of 71.75% of the males and 74.02% of the females. Responses in the agree groupings were as follows: In the 61 plus group 29.41% checked the strongly disagree box and 30.88% the disagree box. In the 18-30 age group 40.52% checked the strongly disagree box and 27.55% checked the disagree box. In the 31-40 age group 44.12% checked the strongly disagree box and 27.94% checked the disagree box. In the 51-60 age group 52.04% strongly disagree with the statement and 26.53% disagree. In the 41-50 age group 56.39% strongly disagree and 22.56% disagree with the statement. Among the denominations the response was strongly disagree 44.30% for the Church of God of Prophecy followed by strongly disagree

45.36% from the Church of God and the Assemblies of God 48.51% strongly disagree with the statement; “I don’t believe homosexuals have a choice in their sexual orientation.”

The next question says, “I believe marriage in the Bible is always between a man and a woman.” See Table 20. Analysis across the denominations show a strong agreement with this statement among all three institutions. 87.9% response rate from Church of God of Prophecy, 89.75% from the Assemblies of God and 91.43% from the Church of God. Between the genders we find a similarly confident pattern; 83.21% for males and 91.19% for females in strong agreement with this statement. When it comes to age groups, 81.63% of 18-30 are in strong agreement, 89.21% of 41-50 are in strong agreement, 90.74% of 51-60 are in strong agreement, 91.3% of 31-40 are in strong agreement, and 93.42% of 61 plus are in strong agreement with the statement, “I believe marriage in the Bible is always between a man and a woman.”

The next question says, “I believe same-sex couples can successfully rear children.” See Table 21. Analyzing the genders we find 19.12% of males disagree and 60.29% strongly disagree. Among females, 17.33% disagree and 64.49% strongly disagree with this statement. Among the age group 18-30, 20.41% disagree while 53.06% strongly disagree. Also it is noted that within this same age group, 13.2% agree that a same-sex couple can successfully rear children; a percentage almost twice as high as the other age groups. Within the 61 plus age group 25% disagree and 55.26%

strongly disagree. In the 31-40 age group 11.94% disagree and 64.18% strongly disagree. In the 51-60 age group 22.64% disagree and 65.09% strongly disagree. In the 41-50 age group 9.79% disagree and 74.43% strongly disagree. Among the denominations 14.83% of Assemblies of God disagree and 68.42% strongly disagree. In the church of God of Prophecy 22.44% disagree and 58.33% strongly disagree. In the Church of God 15.24% disagree and 68.57% strongly disagree.

The next question says, "I believe the Bible does not condemn same-sex marriage" See Table 22. Findings reveal that there is strong disagreement among all three denominations on this point. In The church of God 61.76% strongly disagree and 18.63% disagree. In the Assemblies of God, 69.38% strongly disagree and 14.83% disagree. In the Church of God of Prophecy, 71.15% strongly disagree and 16.03% disagree. Between the genders we find the following: 21.32% of males disagree and 60.29% strongly disagree. 14.45% of females disagree and 70.52% of females strongly disagree. In the 61 plus age group 24.66% disagree and 56.16% strongly disagree. In the 18-30 age group we find a proportionately high level of 'not certain' responses compared to the other age groups. Nonetheless 16.49% disagree and 62.89% strongly disagree. In the 51-60 age group 18.1% disagree and 70.48% strongly disagree. In the 41-50 age group 11.97% disagree and 71.83% strongly disagree. In the 31-40 age group 10.29% disagree and 75% strongly disagree.

The next question says, "I believe same-sex couples should have the same social/legal benefits as heterosexual couples." See Table 23. Analysis of the 18-30

age group shows some notable responses. 12.12% agree and 11.11% strongly agree giving a combined response in favor of the statement of 23.23%. When compared to the other age groups, the next highest in agreement is the 61 plus age group with a combined 19.7%. Following this is the 51-60 age group having a combined agreement of 10.1%, then in the 31-40 age group a combined agreement of 5.97% and 4.69% combined agreement from the 41-50 age group. Despite this large margin of agreement between the age groups the majority disagreed with this statement. In the 18-30 age group 15.15% disagree and 43.43% strongly disagree. In the 31-40, 14.93% disagree and 62.69% strongly disagree. In the 41-50 age group 11.72% disagree and 75% strongly disagree. In the 51-60 age group 19.19% disagree and 56.57% strongly disagree. In the 61plus age group 16.67% disagree and 56.06% strongly disagree. As far as gender is concerned, the males have a combined disagreement of 67.44% whereas the females have a combined disagreement of 77.81%. Within the denominations the findings show the Church of God of Prophecy having a notable level of agreement with this statement compared to the other denominations. A combined agreement of 18.49% compared with 8.34% in the Church of God and 7.58% in the Assemblies of God. Generally, the majority of responses were in disagreement with same-sex couples having the same rights and privileges as heterosexual couples. Assemblies of God had a combined response of 79.8% disagreement, the Church of God had a 79.17% response of disagreement and The Church of God of Prophecy had a combined disagreement of 67.81%.

The final question in this section was, “I would not support a law allowing same-sex marriage in the Bahamas.” In terms of age group there was a large response rate strongly agreeing with this statement. The 61 plus age group received 75.34%, the 51-60 age group received 75.47%, the 31-40 age group received 76.47%, the 18-30 age group received 76.77% and the 41-50 age group received 80.14% in the ‘strongly agree’ category. In terms of denomination the Church of God response was 71% strongly agree, the Church of God of Prophecy was 74.67% and the Assemblies of God was 82.38% also strongly agree that a law allowing same-sex marriage in the Bahamas would not be supported. See Table 24.

5.2.3 Conclusions from Questions on Same-Sex Marriage

From the first question asking whether or not they believed same-sex marriage was wrong, the survey established a strong sentiment against the practice among the Bahamian Pentecostal population. There appeared to be no variations when the categories were separated out between the genders, among the 4 age groups delineated, nor among the three denominations in the research pool. This question by itself gives no further information as to why this was the feeling, however when considered alongside the question, whether or not they believed marriage in the Bible was always between one man one woman, the responses provided a perspective that broadens the presentation of the Pentecostal perspective on this issue. The responses to this latter question were similarly strong in agreement that marriage in the Bible was always between one man and one woman. So what can be gathered is that a notable view of the format of marriage is interpreted from the

Bible to be one man and one woman and because of this scenario being located in the Scriptures it takes on an authoritative view that affects cultural practice and accepted orthodoxy in society.

Yvonne Sherwood writes, “It is, of course, no accident that, in the quest for its identity, the West keeps going back to Genesis and the moment of creation. The origin is a crucial place; the most crucial place. It holds out the promise of a pristine ‘virginity of a story of beginnings’; the idea of beginning as the source of the ‘most precious, most essential’. Hence the ‘superstitious reverence that surrounds the very notion of a Source’ ...the quest for the origin...is an ‘attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities’. It is a search that ‘assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession’; a search for primordial truth as ‘that which was already there’. The lure of the origin is that it is the presumed meeting point for the historical and transcendent, the contingent and the non-contingent. It marks the very first point in time and the transcendental guiding principle of the world.²¹⁴ I agree with Sherwood’s notion of referring to Scriptures as a grounding source of authority because of its ability to articulate the beginning of things as an accurate historical place of reference of one’s existence. This concept provides the reasoning behind some of the major ethical sourcing finding itself located in the Bible. Her description of this innate quest for the primary and the empirical, permits

²¹⁴ Sherwood, Yvonne. “Theo-Politics, Authority and the Bible.” Part. In *Biblical Blaspheming: Trials of the Sacred for a Secular Age*, 301–74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

the ability to satisfy the understanding of life when faced with questions of uncertainty or challenges to existing norms. What is particularly interesting for the Pentecostal context is the concept of the Bible being the meeting place of the transcendent. This philosophy is a significant reason why Pentecostals read the Bible as part of their manner of worship.

Gordon Fee writes, "...the more non-liturgical evangelical culture, represented by such diverse groups as Pentecostals, Baptists, Holiness groups, and endless non-aligned Independents, all of whom actually put a great deal of emphasis on personal Bible reading... the Pentecostal's great strength - the conviction that Scripture is God's very word, a word for the church for all times and climes, inspired by the Holy Spirit for the church's growth and life in the world."²¹⁵ Considering Fee's remarks we get the feel of the Pentecostal's connection to the Bible, which I agree is attached to their way of being in the world and a significant part of the Pentecostal identity.

In looking at the younger segment of Pentecostals from this survey, it is noticeable that there is a quantifiable amount of uncertainty regarding whether or not one's faith is affected by same-sex marriage. This could be due to several things including issues with authority and the tendency to rebel against established norms. A reduced connection to the Bible compared to other older age groups or it could be they have a compartmentalized view of this issue as primarily a civil issue and not a spiritual issue. When the response to the question of whether or not they believe

²¹⁵ Gordon D. Fee (2004) Why Pentecostals Read Their Bibles Poorly - and Some Suggested cures, *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association*, 24:1, 4-15, DOI: 10.1179/jep.2004.24.1.002

the Bible condemns same-sex marriage also has a notable amount of uncertainty in this same 18-30 age group and again with the question of whether they believe same-sex marriage is strictly a civil concern, this gives support to the notion of the younger generation of Pentecostals perhaps not receiving the same sort of transfer of Biblical authority from the previous generation or their pastoral leadership. Or, there is another source of ethics involved in the mechanics of their decision-making. This pattern of uncertainty among the 18-30 age group comes out again in the question of whether they believe God frowns on homosexuality. More definitively, we see an actual notable amount of agreement with the statement concerning same-sex couples rearing children; 13.2% of the 18-30 age group agree that a same-sex couple can successfully rear children. So this young group of Pentecostals in the age bracket of 18-30 have a somewhat more liberal expression concerning the topic of homosexuality and linked issues like same-sex marriage.

5.2.4 Significance of Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from this quantitative study are important for the leadership of the Pentecostal denominations to become aware of the feelings and opinions of this younger generation because these will be the ones to either maintain or alter the identity of Pentecostalism moving forward, at least in this part of the world. These are the ones who would need to buy into the lifestyle that is distinctively Pentecostal in order to preserve the traditions and practices that have become a part of both its character and its mission. If this young segment of the Bahamian Pentecostal community continue to have large amounts of uncertainty regarding issues that are settled in the hierarchy of the church as far as doctrinal platforms,

then it would not be unexpected to see a level of rebellion develop on the horizon, should this path persist. On the other hand this may be due to a lack of effective communication and transference of values and ethics of the Pentecostal faith as they ought, by the teachers and preachers leading the organization or family support of the same. It would be a good future study to examine how effective the transfer of doctrine and teachings from an organizational perspective is among this younger generation as a measure of effective leadership. Even more importantly is the need to have this next leg of leadership be sufficiently grounded in the Pentecostal ethic that with added exposure to growth and development of principles and practices gained from a broader ecumenism they would advance the mission, maintain the identity while enhancing the brotherhood of Christianity in reflecting on the Pentecostal experience in a way that is instructive rather than apologetic. This next generation must be persuaded that Pentecostalism has value. And that value is in part what makes Pentecostalism distinctive.

5.3 Qualitative Study on Same-Sex Marriage

5.3.1 Introduction

It is noted that many of the identified elements impacting a Pentecostal's worldview are not easily, if at all, quantifiable. The boundaries involved may be as varied as the experiences and connectivity to the Bible of the sample being considered. However, this does not mean we cannot attempt to describe, analyze or even interpret patterns that may seem to repeat as a means of developing a working hypothesis that can be beneficial to Pentecostalism as a whole. Accordingly, it becomes

increasingly important to research the nature of those connections between Scripture and the Pentecostal approach to issues confronting Christianity. Such research is especially warranted since Pentecostalism is noted as the fastest growing religious grouping today.²¹⁶ In this regard it is desirable that Pentecostalism not be categorized as a religious fad but create a body of knowledge to support its expanding religious acceptance. If such a resource of information is not sought after, Pentecostalism will lag behind in the academic arena and not reflect what is taking place on the field. However, when more research is attempted to frame this religious phenomenon it would encourage further acceptance of its 'spiritual gifts' as Biblical gifts and worthy of theological reflection. It is hoped that by articulating a practical theology of this religious wave with regard to its approach to deciding complex ethical issues, vis-à-vis engaging the Bible, Pentecostals can be seen as substantive contributors to the progress of Christianity. To put another way, Pentecostalism has impacted almost every mainline denomination in ways that seem not to be transient but represent permanent changes to the practice of the respective denomination. With this in mind, the Pentecostal brand of Christian practice must not be seen as an aberration of what is orthodox but an integral and necessary part of the overall practice of Christianity that had been marginalized for a long time from the traditional/mainline denominations.

²¹⁶ Vinson Synan *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century* [Charisma House Lake Mary, 2011] vii

5.3.2 Focus group Summary

In Response to the question of How do you feel about same-sex marriage, the Assemblies of God focus group gave the following reply, “M1 no gray area, no!” This response was abrupt and to the point. The individual declared that there was no gray area, meaning that there was no ambiguity or area of concern within his mind that would warrant a second look or reconsideration of his position on the subject. He then concluded with an additional “no” in an attempt to vigorously let his opinion be reinforced. This response was not unexpected as the survey data showed an emerging pattern of the Assemblies of God Pentecostals in the Bahamas were more conservative than the other denominations under review. This particular response seemed to almost suggest that even the asking of the question was bordering on being out of order. The next response was, “F2 If it would come to a vote, I would vote against it. But if it becomes law the church should still encourage people not to follow this lifestyle. But if they would attempt to make a law that forces pastors to perform same-sex marriages then I would stand up against it.” This participant appears to be sufficiently convinced of her position against same-sex marriage to the point that she would exercise her legal right to vote against this question if need be. Further, she is of the view that the church should be involved in this issue and actually tell everyone the value of not following this lifestyle but rather turn to follow the example of scripture and choose a lifestyle that is sanctioned by the Bible. This participant also is anticipating some possible outcomes and is attempting to be proactive in her ethical stance and say that even if this was passed as a law she would stand up against it and not give in to the social

pressures to do otherwise. The participant mentions something that is interesting in terms of the state forcing pastors to marry same-sex couples. This means she is getting the sense that perhaps the agenda of those on the same-sex bandwagon would consider establishing a law to force pastors to perform same-sex ceremonies but states that if this were to come to the fore she would stand-up against it.

From the Church of God of Prophecy focus group when asked their opinion on same-sex marriage, “[F3] We are against the act but love the person.” This reply is demonstrative of a strong conviction against the practice but also an awareness of the Pentecostal mission in attempting to reconcile, restore, or revive individuals who may have fallen into a sin situation but that there is refuge available to one and all. It is this extension of love to the individual overtaken with a vice that may enable them to come out of their situation fully redeemed and secure within their newly established identity. Tanya Erzin writes, “Such testimonies, with their narratives of sin, redemption and personal transformation, are central to the way some organizations of the Christian Right view... marriage... I define the Christian Right as a broad coalition of politically active conservative Christians who hold a view...based on theological ideas that the government should be based on biblical values and morality. These Christian Right organizations employ testimonial politics to argue against same-sex marriage. The premise is that belief in Jesus will transform a person: from homosexual to married. From this perspective, a new life

as an evangelical Christian ultimately supersedes previous identities.”²¹⁷ Erzen’s observation of the use of transformational testimonies resonates with the approach of this Church of God of Prophecy participant who is prepared to encourage and engage in available methods to fight against same-sex marriage and fulfill the Pentecostal mission of spiritual transformation of the individual involved and a renewed identity based on a new sourcing of ethics within the scriptures. Another Church of God of Prophecy focus group participant says, “[M1] I’m 100% against it. Not for it!” This response is similar to the one received from the Assemblies of God in that there was an abrupt response and no space given for further interpretation. The expression indicates the same sorts of emotion and lack of ambiguity on the subject. The next response is a question, “[F2] How will the church address this from the pulpit?” The concern detected is one of whether or not this individual feels there are sufficient resources available to the leadership to make a case against the practice or if the leadership is afraid to take the issue head on. Another response from the Church of God of Prophecy, “[F3] But it will become an issue for the country [M2] particularly with the U.S. supporting this issue pressure will come on the country by way of international agreements and government funding access.” The concern presented by these two focus group participants is showing an awareness of the far reaching effects of issues that confront the church as well as the larger society because the church folks must exist in that society and are affected on both fronts. Further, these political concerns speak to a challenge facing the

²¹⁷ Erzen, Tanya. "Testimonial Politics: The Christian Right's Faith-Based Approach to Marriage and Imprisonment." *American Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2007): 991-1015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40068458>.

country's ideals and traditions because of this issue that perhaps started out as an ethical and moral one but has ballooned into a political debate and crisis of national identity.

The Church of God focus group on the question of same-sex marriage: "F1 I have gay friends both male and female and they are decent people I just don't agree with their sexual activity." This sentiment is similar to the Church of God of Prophecy comment of valuing the individual as a soul that can be redeemed but not accepting the homosexual activity. Other responses refer to the political side of the issue: "[F3] I will take a stand even if the society accepts it." [M2] "I will take a stand." This shows willingness on the part of these participants to involve themselves in the efforts to stand against the issue. It demonstrates a strong belief that same-sex marriage is not acceptable. Other comments from the Church of God: "[F3] The law of the land should not influence the Word of God [F2] it should be the other way around. The law of God should influence the law of the land." So here we see a more direct presentation of the moral and ethical conflict in that the Bible is being viewed as coming under the influence of worldly and secular philosophies and situations. However, there is a strong push back from this focus group in that they believe the Bible should be doing the influencing in the society.

5.3.3 Conclusions from Focus group discussion

It is evident that the issue of same-sex marriage is a touch point of both emotional and psychological challenge. The facial expressions and tone of voice encountered

in receiving responses to questions concerning this issue has confirmed this. It can be concluded that this topic is polarizing in terms of awakening an awareness of the spiritual boundaries that existed but perhaps was never noticed before simply because these boundaries were never challenged in this way prior. It has caused blunt and frank expressions against supporting this practice across the denominations, genders, and age groups delineated. This was generally an expected outcome of the discussions with the three groupings. However, in the midst of the apparent hardline expressions, there was a keen awareness of the individuals themselves who support or are seeking to have accepted same-sex marriage. This awareness comes about in terms of Pentecostals wanting these persons to be cared for in a pastoral way and not reject them along with their proposals of same-sex marriage although they are antagonistic to their theological worldview. These Pentecostals of heightened awareness want to see persons caught in this controversy have an opportunity for redemption. Accordingly we find peppered through the focus group discussions a deliberate mention that the individual is loved although their activity is condemned. The other side of this polarization is the move towards political activism in requesting a more deliberate stance be voiced among the faith firstly, and then to the community towards articulating the value of implied boundaries including but not limited to forcing pastors to perform same-sex marriages should a law be passed approving the same. These expressions from the focus group participants demonstrate a proactive approach in attempting to be prepared for possible eventualities considering the worldwide political climate

regarding same-sex marriage where some 26 countries now legally recognize the same as of December 2107.²¹⁸

5.3.4 Comparisons with Quantitative data

The foundational net of this research comes from the quantitative data and it has demonstrated strong opposition to same-sex marriage through the responses given on the survey. Similarly, the focus group discussions supported this view and added another dimension of emotion to the responses. These emotions indicated in some cases, a distaste for the subject. This was seen in the abrupt answers to the questions in the focus group surrounding their feelings about same-sex marriage. These emotions led to further discussions about how the church is going to handle this situation when it presents itself. This latter discussion was supported by the responses on the survey to the question of whether or not they thought same-sex marriage was strictly a civil concern. The strong disagreement to this statement is indicative that there is concern for the spiritual implications of this issue. This was also supported in the focus group discussion when one of the participants wanted to know how the church was going to handle this from the pulpit. This statement is interesting in light of the fact that all three denominations from a leadership perspective have put out official statements on the subject. This can either represent a disconnect from the global leadership to the local congregants or a failure of the local leadership to properly transfer the official position of the church down to the level of the laity. In either case the average member is sufficiently

²¹⁸ Grace Donnelley, Alex Scimeca, The 26 Countries That Have Legalized Same-Sex Marriage — And Photos of the Celebrations, Fortune.com, Dec 07, 2017 [accessed 22 February,2018]

concerned that there is not enough being said on the issue to create a modicum of confidence among the membership. This concern is further manifested when the level of uncertainty observed among the 18-30 age group in the survey continues to be a standout from the expectations on several of the questions. Not enough to change the position of the 18-30 age group category but more than enough to notice that it is time to examine why this is happening and what could be done to ameliorate these circumstances. The survey showed a pattern of the Assemblies of God being the most conservative and the Church of God being the most liberal and the Church of God of Prophecy somewhere in the middle. These overtones were not as noticeable in the focus group discussions at least on this particular subject. Instead among the focus group discussions a heightened awareness of the possible implications same-sex marriage could have on the country in the way it does business particularly in the tourism sector which is the largest economic source in the Bahamas,²¹⁹ was more prominent in the discussions.

5.3.5 Comparisons with Literature

The first country to legalize same-sex marriage was the Netherlands. John Karsten wrote on how this came into being by giving a historical review of the events that led up to the establishing of the law in favor of same-sex marriage. Upon reviewing the response from the religious leaders an interesting scenario developed. He writes, "There were no petitions by Pentecostal churches to stop the same-sex law being passed, nor can I find official denominational declarations against it. Even

²¹⁹ Tourismtoday.com, About the Industry, [accessed 22 February, 2018]

critical articles appear to be absent. The law was presumably ignored. To date I know of no same-sex marriage being church blessed in a Pentecostal church.”²²⁰

This observation is rather unfortunate for the Pentecostal image in the Netherlands and is a prime example that should be shared among other jurisdictions who are facing challenges of morality and ethics in the public realm. While it cannot be said that if the Pentecostal community had taken a stand and spoken their opposition to the law whether or not it would have altered the outcome, but at least the community would be aware of what Pentecostals stand for and at least be represented among the moral authority for that nation. In addition it would have strengthened the ability of the Pentecostal followers to speak with confidence about their church and movement that it was a global player in the Christian community willing to stand shoulder to shoulder with other denominations of similar convictions and simultaneously develop a level of respect in the ecumenical environment. As I compare this scenario in the Netherlands with this current research in the Bahamas I see the desire to engage and not bury one’s head in the proverbial sand. This is encouraging towards the social and political engagement of Pentecostals in the issues affecting the communities and nations in which they reside.

Curtis Ogland looks at this issue in Brazil and writes, “Using data from the Brazilian Social Research Survey, we find that the most restrictive views toward

²²⁰ J.L. Karsten, Adam and Adam: Or Eve and Eve? How same-sex marriage became legal in the Netherlands, *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association*, 34:1, 1-14, DOI: 10.1179/jep.2014.34.1.002

homosexuality and the strongest opposition to same-sex civil unions are most prevalent among devoted followers of historical Protestant, Pentecostal, and Catholic faith traditions, whereas adherents of Afro-Brazilian and spiritist religions, as well as those with no religious commitment, are inclined to assume a more tolerant moral posture toward such issues. The findings point to religion as a potential influence in future public policy initiatives and social movements involving LGBT issues in Brazil.”²²¹ This research in the Brazilian context makes a point that is in line with conclusions drawn from the experience with the Netherlands concerning this issue: Religion can have an impact in the formation of public policy through the influence of ethics.

In the case of Australia, the most recent country to legalize same-sex marriage, this issue was under a tug of war for years. J Malloy writes, “Conservative Christian groups including evangelicals [Baptists and Pentecostals] have been consistently active in resisting the legalisation of same- sex marriage, and their activism and pressure is a likely factor in the slow reluctance of political parties and leaders to support same-sex marriage.”²²² Malloy is showing how an effective pattern influence can be realized by the Pentecostal population when organized and sustained resistance efforts are activated. From the focus group discussions conducted in this research the sentiment rang out, “I will take a stand even if the

²²¹ Curtis P. Ogland & Ana Paula Verona, Religion and the Rainbow Struggle: Does Religion Factor Into Attitudes Toward Homosexuality and Same-Sex Civil Unions in Brazil? *Journal of homosexuality*, Vol. 61, 2014 ISS. 9, 1334-1339

²²² Jonathan Malloy Political opportunity structures, evangelical Christians and morality politics in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 52:3, 2017 402-418, DOI: 10.1080/10361146.2017.1330396

society accepts it!" This perhaps is the beginning of a move toward engagement with issues affecting the society.

In the African context of Kenya there was a turnaround for the Pentecostals in that country from complacency on such controversial hot topics to one of engagement. Parsitau writes, "In February 2002, about forty Pentecostal Church leaders converged at Lake Bogoria Lodge in the Rift Valley to seek divine guidance concerning their prophetic voice and calling: through prayer and fasting, they repented for their complacency in sociopolitical issues, including the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty, corruption, nepotism, and bad governance; they repented for the loss of their prophetic voice and sought God's guidance in their involvement. They agreed to evolve programs and policies to help fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the stigma associated with it. This meeting created a paradigm shift from nonengagement to full engagement in sociopolitical and other national issues affecting the country."²²³ This study by Parsitau is one that showed it took a shocking realization of members within the Pentecostal movement that were dying of the AIDS pandemic to galvanize action on their part as leaders to do something to help. They didn't see it as a single issue but rather saw a holistic reflection of Pentecostalism as a church with a mission that was not engaged in that mission. Accordingly, while the catalyst may have been the HIV/AIDS issue, they were careful

²²³ D.S. Parsitau, "Keep holy distance and abstain till he comes": Interrogating a pentecostal church's engagements with HIV/AIDS and the youth in Kenya *Africa Today*, 56(1), 2009 44-64,120. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/docview/221141997?accountid=8630>

to be open to all sociopolitical issues and to find their collective voice to speak in the public forum.

5.4 Conclusions on the challenge of Same-Sex Marriage

The politics of the issue of same-sex marriage is one that has touched off a heightened awareness among the Bahamian Pentecostals and opened their eyes to its possible outcomes. This awareness created the need for more of a proactive conversation to be started among the patrons and leaders of the Pentecostal tradition towards establishing a theological footprint embedded with the Pentecostal ethic as an identifiable feature of the faith in order to preserve the Pentecostal identity.

On reviewing the literature I believe Pentecostalism is only just now beginning to fully define itself through an ethic of engagement. This is the 'doing' that is needed in every context where Pentecostals are found. This doing is the next step to Daniel Castelo's *Revisioning of Pentecostal Ethics*.²²⁴ Unless Pentecostals engage the society through social action and political involvement the movements' full potential and overarching identity will remain hidden to themselves as well as to others and delay the realization by the ecumenical community of the value Pentecostalism brings to the table of Christian progression.

²²⁴ Daniel Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics The Epicleptic Community* CPT Press Cleveland Tennessee 2012

The interaction of survey data on this issue of same-sex marriage has given a starting point of where Pentecostalism in the Bahamas has positioned itself within the challenges of today's complex issues. It has established some ideas and concepts which were anticipated in terms of the connectivity to the Bible and the reaction to same-sex marriage as a concept. In addition the Bahamian Pentecostals have the desire to see their communities reflect a similar morality and ethical structure. Further dynamics with the focus group discussions have brought out the challenge to engage these complex issues from an organized and unified perspective so that one voice is heard in the society. There appears to be sufficient concern among the focus groups as a reflection of the wider Pentecostal community that taking a back seat to issues that will eventually affect all Pentecostals either directly or indirectly is to miss a significant portion of the Pentecostal mission and to deny an unrealized part of the Pentecostal identity. Social and political engagement is no longer viewed as something to be avoided but is to be embraced as a requisite for remaining relevant, particularly in the eyes of the younger generation falling between the ages of 18-30 as the survey has revealed, where uncertainty looms as an indication that assumed support for certain ethical positions are not necessarily the same as the older age groups. Growth, development, expansion, and broadening of perspectives towards the future while avoiding neglect of what is confronting the faith right now will be paramount to effective identity maintenance as Pentecostals as well as transference of this identity to the younger age groups.

Considering the discovery that the Bible is not the only reservoir from which ethics is drawn in the case of same-sex marriage and the issue of gambling as noted in chapter 4, it becomes important to focus the next chapter on looking more directly into the sources of ethics Pentecostals in the Bahamas draw from in order to design a model that can reflect the ethical navigation of subjects that may arise, questions that may be posed and answers that need to be forthcoming as a Pentecostal. Due to the elusive nature of ethics in that boundaries and sources of ethics are not generally noticed until they are pressed against, it was important to engage these live subjects in the country, gambling and same-sex marriage, in order to unearth some of the hidden ethical borders and 'go to' places. Hence the reason the chapter on sources of ethics comes after the discussion on gambling and same-sex marriage. The discovery of these sources and borders of ethics can be used as the framework on which to design the ethical model that will then be used as a template to predict the response by Bahamian Pentecostals on the up and coming subject of ecotheology. Accordingly, the next chapter focuses on how Pentecostals in the Bahamas develop their ethical ideas.

6. How Bahamian Pentecostals source their ethical ideas?

6.1 Observations

Pentecostals in the Bahamas are in love with their traditions. Particularly when it comes to food, culture, politics and worship. When we open a discussion on ideas about ethics it becomes a complex process of exploration that requires a peeling away of layers of habitual referencing that perhaps the individual may not fully grasp themselves. Authority figures from whom information and ideas are more likely to be absorbed into Pentecostal lives are invariably linked to family structure which, if we consider the society is similarly reflected in Pentecostalism. That being said the Bahamas has a birth rate of 62% occurring among unwed mothers.²²⁵ This translates to more than half of all households in the Bahamas lacking fathers in the home to some degree. This circumstance puts a strain on the search to find a trustworthy authority figure and role model. Sometimes authority may fall on the mother or grandparent due to the fact of simply being available, other times it may not. Some fathers may be involved to some degree as well. Notwithstanding this, the lack of stable authority figures via fathers may create a rebellious attitude to authority when it does eventually show up in this category of persons. This variable becomes influential in terms of ethical concepts being passed down to offspring as

²²⁵ Commonwealth of the Bahamas Vital Statistics Report 2013

presence and availability of trusted authority figures are necessary for dissemination of ideas in terms of acceptance by the student.

This is the first research of this kind done in this area of the Bahamian Pentecostal lifestyle. In studying the Pentecostal perspective and reflecting on the two previous chapters of this thesis, what continues to present itself as a cradle of value is the Bible in terms of ethical sourcing owing to the availability of its presence in homes. In terms of the Bahamas' American neighbours in the United States, 87% of homes own a Bible.²²⁶ Michael Craton and Gail Saunders note that historically in the Bahamas, the Bible was the only book in the family home.²²⁷ These Bible possessing indicators suggest that the scriptures were at least readily available as a source of ethical attitudes and practices. Accordingly, derivatives of principles and concepts within the scriptures are likely drawn upon to formulate a coherent explanation of the decision or choices made in circumstances facing the individual. This tells me that the Bible is a place of authority in the life of the Pentecostal. Even more than that, the Bible serves as a place of refuge and safety such that it is expected to have all the answers. It is an attitude that is readily discernable upon interaction with the focus groups.

This connection to the Bible has permeated the movement and knitted its concepts and stories into the way of being of the individual life. Added to this is the perceived

²²⁶ Barna Group, State of The Bible 2017: Top Findings, www.barna.com [accessed December 8, 2018]

²²⁷ Michael Craton, Gail Saunders *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People: Volume Two* University of Georgia Press, Athens 2000

value of the scriptures beyond the words written on the pages; to the extent that the Bible is viewed as a means to meet God directly in the text.²²⁸ It is more than just a guidebook but it is a portal to the presence of God. The Bible has influenced the way of life on this nation of seven hundred islands since the time of the first landfall of the Pentecostal message connected to the Azusa Street Revival of 1906. This continued to the time of becoming a sovereign nation after obtaining independence from The UK on 10 July, 1973, where Principles and ethics for the nation could be found enshrined in the preamble to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.²²⁹ With the general encouragement to read the Bible to develop one's spiritual life there was a concomitant need to have the bible explained and or interpreted. So the pastors and leaders, preachers and teachers became needed resources to improve the understanding of what was being read. This need created a high level of respect for the Pastor and accordingly the leadership became another source for ethical formation. Due to this link to the scriptures, the pastor's hermeneutics influenced to a great extent the member's interpretation of the text.

The other source of ethics I noticed Pentecostals draw from was personal experience. From the focus group discussions one of the participants said that they had gay friends and found them to be decent people. It was only their sexual activity they did not agree with. This experience allows a separation of the activity from the person and permits a connection that perhaps would have otherwise been shunned.

²²⁸ Andrew Davies, What Does It mean to read the Bible as a Pentecostal? *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2009, p. 216-229.

²²⁹ Preamble to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, 1973

6.2 Quantitative Study on Sources of Ethics

6.2.1 Introduction to questions

The questions selected will serve as the tools for drawing out information from the individuals in the research pool representing the three Pentecostal denominations. The purpose is to determine where the sources of ethics are derived from. Questions related to the Bible will of course be present as it is well known there exists a connection between Pentecostalism and the Bible. The strength of that connection is hoped to be revealed through the quantification of responses received related to this subject area. Several other options for possible sources will be included as questions to see if they are a part of the sources used by Pentecostals in the Bahamas to determine their ethics. It can also be expected that what comes down to the laity as far as what is reiterated or practiced, has the propensity to be watered somewhat due to the competing environmental elements within an individual's context, so seeking quantitative data initially will help to establish a baseline from which we can derive conclusions and examine further with qualitative data.

6.2.2 Analysis of data from questions

The first question in this section asks in the form of a statement, "I believe the Bible is the Word of God" There was an overwhelming response given by the respondents that they strongly agree with this statement. The males responded with 93.18% strongly agree and the females, 97.83% strongly agree. Among the age groups we find in the 61 plus category, 90.91% strongly agree; 18-30 gave 95.2% strongly agree; 41-50 gave 96.95% strongly agree; 51-60 97.74% and 31-40 gave 100%

strongly agree response. Among the denominations we find a similar overwhelming response. The Church of God gave 92.97% strongly agree. The Church of Prophecy gave 96.26% strongly agree and the Assemblies of God gave a response rate of 98.7% strongly agree. This particular question was important to establish from the outset whether or not Pentecostals felt a sufficiently strong connection to the Bible such that individuals feel adequately comfortable declaring that the Bible is God's words in a physical format instead of just verbally. The strength of response to this question can be attributed to the level of faith the respondent has in the Bible itself being God's instructions for lifestyle. It would also indicate the position of influence the Bible would have in the individual's ethics in stated form and possibly what is practiced. See table 25.

The next question says, "I believe the Bible is the only authority for How Christians should live their lives" 78.29% of the males strongly agree with this statement. 85.4% of females strongly agree. Among the age groups we find 63.2% in the 18-30 category strongly agree which is the lowest of all the age groups. 85.53% in the 31-40 age group strongly agree; 85.71% in the 61 plus age group; 88.96% in the 41-50 age group and 92.37% in the 51-60 age group. It should also be noted that the 18-30 age group had the highest level of uncertainty about this statement when compared to the other age groups, 9.6% said 'not certain' compared with 1.02% in the 61 plus category; 1.23% in the 41-50 category; 1.32% in the 31-40 age group and 1.53% not certain in the 51-60 age group. This variation within the 18-30 age group suggests there might be other sources they feel are important for deriving their ethics. This may also be an indication of authority issues for the 18-30 group as

well as a community connectivity issue to Pentecostalism not being as strong and perhaps allowing external influences to have a voice in this area of ethics as far as they are concerned. See Table 26. So the next question addresses this possibility head on.

Question 3 says, "I believe the Bible is one of several sources for ethical guidance." 50.91% of the males responded with strongly agree and 61.36% of the females did likewise. Among the age groups 46.67% of the 18-30 age group strongly agree which was the lowest of all the age groups; 57.33% of the 31-40 age group strongly agree; 61.11% of the 61 plus age group strongly agree; 63.29% of the 41-50 age group responded strongly agree, and 64% of the 51-60 age group responded strongly agree. It should be noted again that the highest amount of uncertainty was among the 18-30 age group compared to all of the other age groups. Among the denominations the Assemblies of God had 55.71% strongly agree; The Church of God of Prophecy had 59.72% strongly agree and the Church of God had 62.93% strongly agree. See table 27. It can be seen that the conviction level on this question is lower than on the question of whether the Bible is the Word of God. This quantifiable space is likely due to another source having input into the ethics of these Pentecostals. This means questions on other sources would be beneficial to discover these places of reference Pentecostals in the Bahamas go to for their ethical mapping. However, before moving in that direction, it is important to see if perhaps we are observing the two-tiered ethic coming to the fore, that the belief of the Bible being God's word in question 1 and that it should be the authority for Christian

lifestyle in question 2, is more of a statement of the ideal or actual practice. The next question will quantify this reality.

This question asks, "Generally, how frequently do you read the Bible?" The genders were as follows; males 43.68% said they read daily and 37.93% said they read weekly. Females 55.85% said daily and 31.71% said weekly. Among the age groups we find 23.77% of the 18-30 age group said they read daily while 38.53 % said weekly. In the 31-40 age group 54.05% read daily and 35.14% read weekly. In the 41-50 age group 54.88% read daily and 34.876% read weekly. In the 51-60 age group 58.33% read daily and 34.85% read weekly. And in the 61 plus age group 70.71% read daily and 25.25% read weekly. The 61 plus group had the highest level of daily reading and the 18-30 age group had the highest level of weekly reading. It says that perhaps the 61 plus have more free time to devote to reading the Bible and the 18-30 are perhaps are too busy to read more than they do. However, this 18-30 age group also had the highest level of reading the Bible only if they thought there was a need, 22.95% See Table 28. This lower than expected level of reading is significant in terms of expectation because it would suggest that the responses were more from the ideal stated ethic but in terms of practice we would perhaps see something different. So now we move to other potential sources.

Question 4 asks, "I believe Parents should provide ethical guidance." Between the genders, 74.12% of the males strongly agree with this statement and 79.71% of females strongly agree a relatively similar response rate. Among the age groups, 18-

30 have a combined agree and strongly agree of 96.72%, 31-40 have a combined agreement of 100%, 41-50 gave a combined response of 98.77 in agreement with this statement, 51-60 gave a combined response of 99.22 in agreement also. In the 61 plus age group 97.89% responses were in agreement with this statement. There appears to be no dissension among any of the categories delineated on this question. See Table 29. This idea of parents influencing ethics of their offspring produced weighted results in the direction of considering parents as a strong source of lifestyle values.

The next question related to this says, "I am/will be teaching my children the same ethical principles my parents taught me." 94.09% of the males gave a combined agree and strongly agree response and 94.08% of the females did likewise. Among the age groups, 18-30 responded with 88.62% combined agree; 31-40 responded with 90.79% combined agree; 41-50 had 96.9% combined agree; 51-60 had 95.27% combined agree and 61 plus responded with a combined agree and strongly agree of 96.2%. Among the denominations the Assemblies of God had a combined agree and strongly agree of 93.31%, The Church of God of Prophecy had a combined agreement of 93.93% and the Church of God had 95.12% combined agreement. No notable variations on this question were detected on the survey. See Table 30. This transference of ethics to offspring is indicative of the pivotal role parents have in the passing on of values to their offspring. It also indicates that there appears to be favorable parenting situations among those surveyed.

The next question looks at the church as a distributor of ethics. Question 5 asks in the form of a statement, "I Believe the Church should provide ethical guidance." The male population responded with a combined agree and strongly agree of 96.45%. The females responded with a combined agree and strongly agree of 97.98%. Among the age groups, 18-30 a combined agree and strongly agree is 94.16%; 31-40 is 98.66%; 41-50 is 98.11%; 51-60 is 99.19% and in the 61 plus age group we get a combined agree and strongly agree response of 100%. Among the denominations the Assemblies of God responded with 97.75% when combining agree and strongly agree. The Church of God of Prophecy responded with 99.05% combined agree and strongly agree and the Church of God responded with a combined agree and strongly agree of 96.53%. There are no responses that were out of the ordinary. See Table 31. The results indicate the role of the church in giving out the ideal and expected ethical principles. This is perhaps related to the church's use of the Bible in its activities, programs and services.

The next question related to this is, "I think the Bible should shape the beliefs of the Christian church" From the survey the following results were obtained among the genders: The male response rate was 84.12% strongly agree with this statement. The female response was 88.4% strongly agree. Among the age groups, 77.69% in the 18-30 age group strongly agree with this statement. 88.29% in the 61 plus age group strongly agree; 89.33% in the 31-40 age group strongly agree; 90.57% in the 41-50 age group strongly agree and 92.19% of the 51-60 age group strongly agree with the statement. Among the denominations, The Church of God at 76.23% had

the lowest percentage of strongly agree with a larger proportion of 20.49% in the agree category compared with the other denominations. The Church of God of Prophecy had 89.25% strongly agree with the statement and the Assemblies of God had 91.4% strongly agree with the statement that the Bible should shape the beliefs of the Christian church. See Table 32. These responses indicate a similarly close connection between the church and the Bible in terms of its doctrine.

The next potential source evaluates the role of friends. Question 11 says, “A Trusted Friend is a good source of ethical guidance” Generally speaking, there was not a high level of confidence in this statement as the responses were almost evenly balanced between agree and disagree as well as not certain. However the agree response rate was slightly better overall and the not certain and disagree were just about the same with this statement. Between the genders the survey revealed the male response at 30.06% agree, 22.7% not certain and 23.93% disagree. With females, 31.08% agree, 22.81% not certain and 24.31% disagree. Among the age groups 18-30 25.62% agree, 33.88% not certain, 19.01% disagree. In the 31-40 age group 30.26% agree, 26.32% not certain, and again 26.32% disagree. In the 41-50 age group 32.91% agree, 20.89% not certain and 22.15% disagree. In the 51-60 age group 35.71% agree, 15.87% not certain and 26.98% disagree. In the 61 plus age group 26.14% agree, 15.91% not certain and 29.55% disagree. Among the denominations the Assemblies of God had 34.4% agree, 20.18% not certain and 24.77% disagree. In the Church of God of Prophecy 27.14% agree, 24.76% not certain and 25.71% disagree. The Church of God responded with 31.67% agree, 20% not certain and 20.83%

disagree with accepting a trusted friend as a good source of ethical guidance. See Table 33. This perhaps is related to the idea that a trusted friend is one to corroborate what you are thinking and not necessarily a valued source in terms of one's way of life. However, friends can have an influence. Perhaps it would depend on the example the friend displays in terms decisions and integrity over the life of the friendship.

The next source to consider is the self. Question 17 says, "I believe its okay to do anything I feel is okay as long as it doesn't hurt anyone" Between the genders, the males responded with a combined disagreement and strong disagreement of 71.17% with this statement. The females gave a combined disagree and strongly disagree of 80.9%. Among the age groups 18-30 the combined disagreement was 65.38%. In the 31-40 age group the combined disagreement was 81.08%. In the 41-50 age group the combined disagreement was 80.38%. In the 51-60 age group the combined disagreement was 84.61%. In the 61 plus age group the combined disagreement was 76.67%. Among the denominations the combined disagreement with the Assemblies of God was 81.69%. With the Church of God of Prophecy the combined disagreement was 83.17% and with the Church of God the combined disagreement was 63.64%. See Table 34. This question suggests in terms of ethics there is not much use for rationalization of practices that may go against biblical principles. It gives weight to the preference by Bahamian Pentecostals for a more deontological approach to ethics in that something that is inherently wrong is to be avoided. The other idea is that the Pentecostal is defined by a transformative

lifestyle compared to that before becoming a Pentecostal Christian. So this turning away from self and clinging to God's Word gives a reason for the unfavourability noted in the responses to self as a viable source for ethics.

The next question is the opinion on this statement: "I Believe God gives everyone the freedom to choose their ethical behaviour" Between the genders 61.59% of the males strongly agree with this statement and 56.58% of the females strongly agree also. Among the age groups we find 52.42% strongly agree in the 18-30 bracket. 57.53% in the 31-40 age group strongly agree; 61.69% in the 41-50 age group strongly agree; 62.02% strongly agree in the 51-60 age group and in the 61 plus bracket 57.29% strongly agree with this statement. Among the denominations, the Assemblies of God 57.21% strongly agree; the Church of God of Prophecy had 59.91% strongly agree and the Church of God had 60.83% strongly agree with this statement. See Table 35. This result is a bit interesting in that I would have thought that as Pentecostal adherents who hold the Bible in high priority, they would be aware of the biblical principle of God giving everyone a free will; particularly as it relates to accepting Jesus Christ as their Saviour. John 3:16 alludes to this, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

The Pastor as an ethical source is evaluated in this next question that says, "My pastor gives good guidance on moral living and ethical behaviour." The male

response was 59.04% strongly agree and the female was 64.68% strongly agree with the statement. Among the age groups 18-30 49.17% strongly agree; In the 31-40 age group 58.67% strongly agree; In the 41-50 age group 69.62% strongly agree; In the 51-60 age group 70.31% strongly agree; and in the 61 plus age bracket 60.64% strongly agree. Among the denominations the Assemblies of God had 67.26% strongly agree; the Church of God of Prophecy 62.20% strongly agree and the Church of God had 58.20% strongly agree that the pastor gives good guidance on moral living and ethical behaviour. See Table 36. These responses show a fairly solid valuation of the role of the pastor in terms of ethics. The 41-50 age group along with the 51-60 age group had the highest response rate of 'strongly agree.' This could be related to the possibility that this age group attends church more often than the other age groups and would therefore have a stronger experience of the pastor in terms of ethical communications and actions.

The next source to consider is 'school teachers.' Question 18 says, "I believe school teachers should guide ethical decisions/behaviour of students." Generally there was agreement with this statement with the majority of the responses falling into the 'agree' category. 54.65% of the males agree with this statement, and 54.65% of the females agree. In terms of age groups we find 51.64% of the 18-30 age group agree; 51.32% of the 31-40 age group agree; 48.77% of the 41-50 age group agree; 50% of the 51-60 age group agree and the 61 plus age group had 53.13% agree. Among the denominations 50% of the Assemblies of God agree; 53% of the Church of God of Prophecy and 53.23% of the Church of God agree that 'school teachers' should guide

the ethical decisions/behaviour of students. See Table 37. The response rate as a determination of level of conviction regarding this statement is not as strong as the Pastoral source but it is indicative of some value being placed in 'school teachers' as an ethical source.

The next source to consider came about as a result of the text-based research regarding the involvement of music in the mission efforts of the early years of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas. Accordingly the next survey statement probes this question. It says, "The songs we sing in church provide a good pattern for living." 49.1% of males strongly agree with this statement and 50.37% females also strongly agree. Among the age group 18-30, 36.89% strongly agree; in the 31-40 age group 50% strongly agree, In the 41-50 age group 54.72% strongly agree; In the 51-60 age group 52.34% strongly agree and in the 61 plus age group 50% strongly agree. Among the denominations the Assemblies of God had 52.63% strongly agree, the Church of God of Prophecy 45.12% strongly agree and the Church of God had 55.08% strongly agree that the songs they sing in church provide a good pattern for living. See Table 38. These responses cue us in on the value of a non-traditional ethical vehicle found in songs sung during church services. There is a belief, based on the responses to this survey question that a good pattern of living can be found through the lyrics of the songs sung at church.

Related to this ethical vehicle of music is question 16 that says, "Some secular songs demonstrate examples of a good lifestyle." The male response was 46.39% agree

with this statement. The females had 45.43% of respondents agree with this statement. Among the age groups 18-30, 43.9% agree; In the 31-40 age group 48.68% agree In the 41-50 age group 47.06% agree' In the 51-60 age group 50.4 % agree. In the 61 plus age group 36.26% agree. Among the denominations, the Assemblies God had 40.27% agree, the Church of God of Prophecy had 49.04% agree and the Church of God had 46.61% agree. See Table 39. Interestingly, there was not much variation with response levels when compared to the previous question of songs sung in church. This indicates that there is some filtering going on where songs with lyrics containing positive messages about lifestyle are also found in some secular songs.

The next question says, "I believe the Bible should influence the laws of the Bahamas." In the gender category, the males responded with 70.18% strongly agree. The females had a response rate of 71.43% strongly agree. In the age group 18-30 51.61% strongly agree. In the 31-40 age group 75.68 % strongly agree. In the 41-50 age group 76.54% strongly agree. In the 51-60 age group 74.42% strongly agree and in the 61 plus age group 79.38% strongly agree. Among the denominations the Assemblies of God had 74.34% strongly agree; the Church of God of Prophecy had 68.08% strongly agree and the Church of God 71.2% strongly agree that the Bible should influence the laws of the Bahamas. See Table 40. This question probes the first of the two-tiered ethic we find occurring throughout this study of Pentecostalism: The stated ideal ethic of how things should be. This particular study question could also become a starting point of the Pentecostal move towards

engaging public policy. The notion is already present that a large majority of Pentecostals would like to see the Bible influence the laws of the Bahamas so if this is not happening to any notable degree then it points to the second tiered ethic of what is actually being done. It could be a flashpoint to activate Pentecostal movement in this direction of affecting public policy to a greater extent.

6.2.3 Conclusions on sources of ethics survey responses

A quantitative survey of congregations belonging to the three largest Pentecostal denominations was given in the form of a questionnaire asking all groups the same questions for ease of comparison. This was conducted to produce a quantifiable measure of agreement, disagreement or uncertainty about the questions being asked. This approach will become a baseline point of reference for the overall research. With regard to where Pentecostals in the Bahamas obtain their ethics, the responses to the questions posed presented an unmistakable pattern of including The Bible as a primary source.

The focus of this section of the questionnaire is to identify basic categories Pentecostals in the Bahamas turn to as an authority for lifestyle decisions and practices. In particular, the sources they draw from in determining their ethics. Questions were framed around avenues thought to be significant contributors involved in the process of determining the ethical map of Bahamian Pentecostals. The examination begins with many claims about the Bible that are often connected

with Pentecostals in general. Indeed many Pentecostal theologians have indicated some tether to the Bible in expressing their particular nuance to the body of Pentecostal knowledge. The context of the Bahamas is unavoidably influenced by the United Kingdom in that it was under direct British rule until 1973. William Kay examines Pentecostals that emerged in the early 1900's in the UK and suggests that the common denominator among these groups was the Bible. He writes, "They did not follow the Anglicans whose basis of unity resided largely in the bishop who is traditionally the source of, and defender of, orthodox doctrine. Rather, it was the text of the Bible itself and an established interpretation of the text that provided the foundation for cooperation and fellowship."²³⁰ This observation by Kay points to the core structure of the development of the Pentecostal lifestyle and accordingly the practice of ethics. The Bible, early on has taken a lead role in the framing of Pentecostalism. While Kay looked at two schools of thought on the priority of the Bible: Inerrant and infallible, the fact remains that the Bible is the central source of authority. Interestingly, Kay alludes to the fact that the Anglicans tended to rely on the bishop as the source of religious practice. Accordingly, the ethical development of these adherents would naturally follow that of the religious authority. I think this particular contrast forms a defining line between what it means to be Pentecostal in terms of ethical development. Whether this defining line remains the same, as other sources of ethics weigh into the mix remains to be evaluated. However, It should not be overlooked that in the Anglican context the bishop interpreted the Bible and then disseminated this worldview among the parishioners. Is this not unlike the

²³⁰ William K Kay, Pentecostals and the Bible, Journal of the European Pentecostal theological Association, 24:1, P. 71-83 2004

Pentecostals who must also interpret the Bible and then form an opinion or judgment as to the appropriate hermeneutical approach and derive meaning? It might be giving weight to an assumption that because the Anglican bishop is the 'go to' source that he is necessarily promoting personal ideas. The more important question is whether the Anglican bishop is using the Bible or not to form ethical practice.

Allan Anderson writes concerning the Bible in Pentecostal practice, "Pentecostalism as a whole also identifies its beliefs with the biblical worldviews."²³¹ Anderson's statement points to a system of principles, ideas or concepts that have been accepted and practiced by Pentecostals such that it can be readily associated with biblical ethics. Anderson's overview, I would agree, can be applied to Bahamian Pentecostalism as well, to the extent that the Bible can be seen in the forefront of the Bahamian Pentecostal way of life via a display of fundamental themes derived from the Bible. Whether this connection remains as strong when it comes to controversial hot topics that may have little or no direct mention in the Bible will be examined shortly within the Bahamian context. Nonetheless, the principle Pentecostal source for ethics remains the Bible among Bahamian Pentecostals. Nimi Wariboko in introducing his concept of the Pentecostal principle indicates Pentecostalism's inaugural stage presence is derived from the account of Luke in Acts 2 and the current expression of Pentecostalism around the world are reverberations of this

²³¹ Allan Anderson, *To The Ends of The Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* [Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013] p. 120

foundational event.²³² This assertion by Wariboko I would agree, is applicable to the Bahamian context in that the initiation of the Pentecostal experience to the Bahamian populous was similarly, dramatic and explosive as it attracted persecution just like its Acts 2 origin. Speaking of the first Pentecostal convert in the Bahamas, Arabella Eneas, She tells of her experience of being saved sanctified and receiving the Holy Ghost on one hand and on the other, having her two houses set on fire and burning to the ground as a result of her new Pentecostal witness, losing almost all of her possessions.²³³

Frank Macchia speaks of Luke and Paul's concepts of pneumatology as found in scripture while exploring a theology of Spirit Baptism.²³⁴ In Vinson Synan's 'Spirit Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century,' Thomson Matthew and Kimberly Alexander speak of the biblical text in developing a theology of healing that is distinctly Pentecostal.²³⁵ This observation by Matthew and Alexander of the sourcing of the healing doctrine being the Bible is consistent with Pentecostals in the Bahamas who base their beliefs and practices of this phenomenon with the pattern portrayed in the stories of healing effected by prayer as presented in the scriptures. My research shows that 89.21% of the Bahamian Pentecostal pool, say they have been healed as a result of prayer. This large statistic indicates a strong

²³² Nimi Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle* [Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012] p. 19

²³³ Michael Swann *The Holy Jumpers* Maitland Xulon Press 2018, p.13

²³⁴ Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit A Global Pentecostal Theology* Grand Rapids Zondervan, 2006 p. 14-16

²³⁵ Thomson Matthew and Kimberley Alexander in Vinson Synan's *Spirit Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century* [Lake Mary, Charisma House, 2011] p. 315-317

link by Bahamian Pentecostals to the concept of healing as presented in the Bible through prayer initiatives. On a more direct note Andrew Davies in looking at how Pentecostals read the Bible indicates the desire to encounter God as a motivating factor in reading the biblical text. In the context of Pentecostals in the Bahamas, qualitative data indicate a propensity for female Pentecostals being more inclined to read the bible because of their social status within the Bahamian cultural milieu. In particular, the disproportionate share of women required to shoulder the responsibility of work, child rearing and family leadership as the tipping point of needing more spiritual support and direction in navigating their lives. Accordingly, Pentecostal women look more frequently to the Bible through direct and indirect means such as daily meditations and Bible-infused motivational magazines and books to provide ethical support in navigating their lives. This resonates with Andrew Davies findings in part that Pentecostals read the Bible to encounter God, however in the Bahamian environment, an emerging quest for an encounter with God is predicated on finding spiritual support for life management. And, this quest is predominantly leaning towards the female Pentecostals. Being aware of this scholarly connectivity to the Bible, it would be profitable to look at the current associations with the scripture Pentecostals in our research pool engage towards influencing their ethical decisions.

The question asks, in the form of a statement, the level of agreement or disagreement with the following “I believe the Bible is the Word of God.” This statement makes several assumptions including the supposition that the respondent

believes in God and that they believe he is communicating or has communicated to the reader possibly through this written document. What this statement further assumes is the knowledge that the Bible was written by human hands.

Notwithstanding this, it is further assumed that some divine interaction has taken place such that what was written is actually from God and not the ideas of the writer alone. To put another way, the writers were inspired by God to write. This belief causes the Bible to take on a higher status than that of ordinary books or written documents in the eyes of the respondent; it becomes sacred to them. This question “I believe the Bible is the Word of God” attempts to go directly to the primary belief structure of the individual respondent and when added to the other respondents will provide an indicator of the Pentecostal pool this research draws from. There is another influence that could be at play in this statement; the respondent could reply based on cultural norms within the environment of the church setting where the pastor probably on more than one occasion has made this statement or something similar with the support of the congregation through nods of agreement or an audible ‘amen.’ If this scenario were operating at the time of the questionnaire I would expect a higher number of ‘not certain’ responses. Further probing in the questionnaire seeks to mitigate this possibility and get to the respondents’ actual personal belief instead of the respondents’ interpretation of what should be stated on the questionnaire as a result of the cultural environment. Nonetheless, persons in this category are not likely to comprise a large portion of the respondent pool since the survey was conducted anonymously, which encourages respondents to present an honest opinion without fear of criticism.

The results show that 96% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement; “I believe the Bible is the Word of God.” This indicates there is an overwhelming belief that the Bible is in fact God’s word. This level of agreement lends support to the conviction that the Bible is sacred to them. Table 25 shows there was consistency across gender, age groups and denomination in this regard. This strong response level in favor of believing that the Bible is the Word of God sets up an expected foundation for an ethical core grounded in the Bible among Bahamian Pentecostals. I would expect then that the majority of ethical positions preferred or displayed by these Pentecostals would find some familiarity to the concepts and principles found in the Bible. Notwithstanding this, what people say in the ideal is not necessarily what they do in the normal. The level of conviction of a particular concept or belief is qualified by the application of the involved principle. It is on that conviction and subsequent application that I seek to build a descriptive framework of the Bahamian Pentecostal ethical map. Believing the Bible is the Word of God and attaching significance to this belief in terms of altering, adjusting or allowing one’s behaviour or lifestyle to be affected by such a belief requires additional evidence. Questions targeted to this specific investigation follows: The first question says, “I believe the Bible is the only authority for how Christians should live their lives.” This question moves closer to attaching significance to the belief that the Bible is the Word of God. It seeks to determine whether that significance ought to be classified as the authority for the respondent’s lifestyle. It also suggests that there may be other

categories of influence for the Christian way of life but they ought not supersede the authority of the Bible.

84% of all respondents strongly agree that the Bible is the only authority for how Christians should live their lives and there is consistent agreement across denominations. However, the female sample seems to feel slightly more strongly about this compared to the males. This could be due to the fact that the female sample also feels slightly stronger that the Bible is the Word of God. Interestingly, there appears to be a notable amount of uncertainty in the 18-30 age group, and a significant amount feel less strongly that the Bible is the only authority for how Christians should live their lives. This difference could be due to the influence of secularism through the media and other outlets as well as it could be due to less emphasis placed on the bible's authority by the churches they attend. In other words less teaching or promotion of the Bible's authority by the denominations to the extent that sufficient significance is attached to the belief that the Bible is the word of God such that it warrants an adherence and alignment of one's lifestyle to the pattern contained therein. If only 63.2% of the younger Pentecostals strongly agree that the Bible has priority in the Christian lifestyle, it may mean that it is not the only factor involved in their ethical process. This also shows a gap in the transference legacy of the older age groups to the younger ones. We can see a decreasing trend of strong agreement that the Bible is the only authority for how Christians should live their lives from the 51-60 age group down to the 41-50 group, down to 31-40 group and finally the 18-30 age group. This perhaps should be cause

for concern among the Pentecostal leadership with regard to their effectiveness of message towards stated beliefs and identifying ethical positions.

The next question tries to include the possibility of other entities beyond the Bible being involved in the process of ethics in order to increase the understanding of where and how this process takes place. The question states, "I believe the Bible is one of several sources for ethical guidance." This statement when combined with the previous one will identify the Bible's priority as well as include the possibility of other sources Pentecostals use to formulate their ethics.

60% strongly agree that the Bible is one of several sources for ethical guidance. Notably the strength of this belief is lower than the previous question, which may suggest that there is recognition of other sources when it comes to ethical matters. However there remains an observable amount of uncertainty among the younger Pentecostals particularly the males. This may be related to settling in on what they choose to believe; they may still be searching and reserve definitive judgments until they are satisfied with their search. Respondents may not realize the sources where they get their ethics unless they are specifically mentioned, for example it has already been noted the strong role the Bible has in their belief structure. This role the Bible plays in the respondents' lives could be graded by the frequency of Bible reading.

The question asks, "Generally, how frequently do you read the Bible?"

That is to say from physically picking up the Bible or electronically enabled Bible App and reading its contents. This represents an important marker in terms of interaction in that it indicates a belief that in doing this activity there is something to be gained. It further indicates that the repeated activity has already yielded some sort of benefit and justifies a certain level of frequency. It also assumes that part of the reason for reading the Bible is related to ethical practice and lifestyle. In addition, built into this question is an assumption that there are sufficient skills at work to facilitate actual reading and comprehension that is to say some understanding of what is being read to the extent that it is a repeated activity. The degree of that belief of gaining something may be related to the frequency of Bible reading indicated. With regard to the frequency of Bible reading indicated there may be other factors at play, such as the opinion that Christians should read the Bible often and perhaps even more than that, Pentecostals. This overarching opinion may have an influence in the frequency of Bible reading indicated. However it is hoped that other questions associated with the role of the Bible in the respondent's life would mitigate this environmental or religious cultural expectation having undue influence on the responses indicated.

It would appear that daily Bible reading tends to increase with age among our sample with the highest percentage occurring in the 61+ age group. This could be related to busyness in that the older age group as one would expect to have more retired persons who have more available leisure time. The converse is shown in the weekly readers where the largest percentage is among the 18-30 age group and the

smallest among the 61+ group. This lends support for the notion of time in that the youngest age group tends to be busy with career, family and personal development compared to the oldest age group. However, there is a significant difference in the 18-30 group that can be attributed to perceived need to read the Bible. The highest proportion of persons who read only if there is a need is among this youngest group and when added to the smallest percentage who read on a daily basis shows a gap in significance attached to Bible reading. This in turn would give room for other sources to have a greater influence on the ethical choices this age group would make.

In terms of other sources the next several questions seek to identify those other sources by being more specific and allowing respondents to recognize the other potential places they may be drawing from. It is understood that there may be other sources apart from those examined in these questions that Pentecostals draw from to obtain their ethics but the attempt here is to identify sufficient areas that a viable framework could be developed. These ethical source questions include: parents, the church, a trusted friend, self, radio and TV talk show hosts, the pastor, a school teacher, religious and secular songs.

77.67% strongly agree with the statement “I believe parents should provide ethical guidance.” So ‘parents’ appears to be a significant source of ethics for our respondent pool. This opinion may stem from an idyllic perspective held by the respondents that parents, as an institution, should be the means by which ethical

principles are disseminated to offspring. It may also mean that in the opinion of the respondents, parenting as experienced in society, seems to abdicate this particular practice and needs to return to a role of providing ethical guidance. The observable lack of two parent families in the Bahamas would have likely influence in this line of thinking. Of note, the 18-30 age group do not feel as strongly about this as older age groups. This shows a reducing belief among the younger generation in the role of parents with regard to ethical determinants. This response is expected, as the younger age group would be directly influenced by the lack of parents in the home and perhaps not see parents as a necessity in rearing and accordingly a similar level of non-significance would be attached to them being a source of ethics. The follow-up question to this "I am/will be teaching my children the same ethical principles my parents taught me." Table 30 shows that while 'parents' is considered a significant source, it does not always happen to be favourable as a small percentage are either not certain or actually disagree that they would transfer ethics from this source. What must be considered in this is that there may be parents of respondents who were not Christians and did not subscribe to the same source of ethics, so what may have been practiced during their rearing does not agree with the current lifestyle of the respondent. Accordingly, the affected respondent would likely choose not to transfer that particular set of ethics to their own offspring. Another perspective could include the possibility that those respondents who would not transfer ethics from their parents may not have had parents in their lives so parents would not have been an option for receiving or transferring ethics. Statistics show that as of 2012 approximately 60% of children born in the Bahamas were to unwed

mothers, a trend that is markedly different from the 1930's where 30% of children were born to unwed mothers.²³⁶ These numbers show an increasing lack of parental influence on the population. Other reasons for the lack of parental ethics being transferred could include death, abandonment and poor parenting skills. What may be an interesting observation is that the Bible does speak to the issue of parents providing ethical guidance. It says in Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It should follow, that respondents who hold the Bible as a priority should also have parents as a significant source of ethics because the Bible speaks directly to this subject.

71.45% strongly agree that the church should provide ethical guidance. This identifies the church as a significant source of ethics. The church however could be a broad umbrella because this may include things taught in the Sunday-School class, preached by a minister or pastor or written policies of the organization. Within this milieu the culture, practices and norms of the church environment must also be considered a part of the guidance or influencing process in questions of ethics. Although complex and multifaceted, the church is viewed as a valuable source. As one would expect, the connection to the Bible, through its common usage during most if not all of its activities whether worship services, Bible studies, prayer meetings, business meetings and youth group sessions, is the common thread of allegiance that places the church as a valuable source of ethics. Table 7 shows the 18-30 group possess a greater amount of uncertainty about the church providing

²³⁶ Commonwealth of the Bahamas Vital Statistics Report 2013

ethical guidance when compared to the other age groups. In addition, among those who feel the church should provide ethical guidance, that feeling is less strong when compared to the older age groups. This may be due to questions they may have about the authoritative role of the church and whether they accept what their church is dispensing in terms of lifestyle of its members. It may indicate a lack of clarity about what is dispensed and thus giving rise to the higher levels of uncertainty.

The question “I think the Bible should shape the beliefs of the Christian church,” gives support to the notion of the Bible’s overwhelming involvement in the church culture because it reinforces the priority of the Bible. The survey shows that 86.73% strongly agree with this statement, indicating an overwhelming preference for the Bible as its influencing entity. Interestingly, more than double the percentage of the Church of God population feel less strongly about this when compared to the other denominations. This variation is strongest among the 18-30 age group within the Church of God and in particular among the male respondents. Only 55.56% of the males in this category feel strongly that the church should provide ethical guidance compared to 84.21% in the Church of God of Prophecy and 85.71% in the Assemblies of God.

Only 15.06% strongly agree that a trusted friend is a good source of ethical guidance with 30.81% agreeing. However, 24% disagree and 8.46% strongly disagree so it would appear that a trusted friend is not a significant source of ethics. Table 9

shows general consistency on this question among the denominations, gender, and age groups

The question, “I believe its okay to do anything I feel is okay as long as it doesn’t hurt anyone,” speaks to the ‘self’ as a source of ethical judgment and expression. If the priority in choosing an ethical path is self motivated, then there would be support for this statement. In response 42.67% strongly disagreed and 33.67% disagreed. This tells us that ‘self’ as a source of ethics is not generally considered appropriate in terms of making choices according to one’s personal feelings about the given situation. It tells us that there needs to be some other authority or standard that should take the lead in questions of ethics. In Table 10 the Church of God sample shows the smallest amount of disagreement with the statement when compared to the other denominations. The Assemblies of God had the highest percentage of strong disagreement with 49.55%.

With regard to the follow-up question, “I Believe God gives everyone the freedom to choose their ethical behaviour.” 58.71% strongly agree and 33.63% agree that God gives them the freedom to choose their ethical behaviour. This freedom seems tenuous, as there is some restraint in the numbers of respondents who accept that this freedom exists. Perhaps those respondents feel that God would not allow persons to choose a negative path or thought process so feel that God is not involved in the freedom to choose. On the other hand some respondents may think God simply does not give everyone freedom to choose their ethical behaviour. In

considering these two survey questions together they demonstrate that 'self' is not a significant source of ethics for Bahamian Pentecostals. In approaching the view that the majority of respondents were given the freedom to choose their ethical behaviour and they choose not to rely on self as a source suggests a few possibilities. There is a low view of 'self.' Perhaps 'self' is seen as inherently misleading. Perhaps respondents are aware of the struggle for right and wrong going on within their own thought processes and are further aware of the choices they have made in the past that perhaps are now considered wrong by their own standards. The Bible speaks about the self in terms of not depending on it. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." So respondents who hold the Bible as priority would tend not to have 'self' as a source. The question, "I believe everyone is born with an inbuilt sense of right and wrong" supports this conclusion as 55% strongly agree with this statement. Accordingly, Pentecostals in the Bahamas generally avoid reliance on self in matters of ethics.

61.6% strongly agree and 33.84% agree that their pastor gives good guidance on moral living and ethical behaviour. This indicates that the pastor has a significant role in sourcing ethics for the respondents as there is a high level of favourable support for the pastor in meting out positive ethical guidance. There is an approximate 20% difference between the 18-30 age group and the 51-60 age group with the latter believing more strongly that their pastor gives good guidance on

ethical and moral living. As a follow-up it would be helpful to examine where pastors source their ethics and see if this is heavily influenced by the Bible as expected. [34 out of 35 or 97.14% of pastors strongly agree that the Bible is the word of God. 30 or 88.24% strongly believe the bible is the only authority for how Christians should live their lives. 65.71% strongly agree parents should provide ethical guidance and 64.71% strongly agree that the church should provide ethical guidance. 17.14% strongly agree and 57.14% agree that school teachers should provide ethical guidance. These findings tell us that the pastors source their ethics in descending order of preference from the Bible, the Church, Parents, and teachers.

35.4% strongly agree that school-teachers should guide the ethical decisions and behaviour of students. 50.4% agree to this statement showing a general shift of intensity away from the strongest position a respondent could offer.

Notwithstanding this, teachers as a source for ethical instruction and dissemination when compared to other sources, maintains a significant role. Even when viewed from the particular demographics identified in the table, there still remains a significant percentage of the respondents that identifies teachers as a major player in the formation of ethical standards. In part, this stems from the role of teachers as authority figures in society from childhood; they tend to be one of the first such authority figures outside of the home that children encounter. Studies have consistently supported this conception that teachers represent a certain level of

morality in society²³⁷ ²³⁸. In addition, this overarching opinion lends towards the search by parents to have their children enrolled in the best schools. What is implied when using the broad term of 'best schools' is a complement of teachers that have the personal integrity and skillset that parents would appreciate as role models for their offspring²³⁹. There is a notable amount of uncertainty in this category and a slightly larger amount of disagreement to teachers playing this ethical role in students rearing. The uncertainty and disagreement could stem from personal experience with teachers as well as respondents not wishing this life activity to come under the purview of the teaching profession. What could also be at work in this line of thinking is the possibility that parents were unable to send their children to the school they preferred due to economic reasons. Accordingly, they would be reticent to accede the ethical development of their kids to teachers from a school not considered among the best²⁴⁰.

With regard to religious music, in particular the songs sung in church, 50.14% strongly agree that it provides a good pattern for living whereas only 12.48% strongly agree that secular music does the same thing. On first glance this appears to

²³⁷ Barbara Sherman Teachers' Identifications with Childhood Authority Figures *The School Review*, Vol. 71, No. 1, Teaching: A Profession and a Process (Spring, 1963), pp. 66-78 The University of Chicago Press

²³⁸ Elina Erzikova "University Teachers' Perceptions and Evaluations of Ethics Instruction in the Public Relations Curriculum," *Public Relations Review* Vol. 36 issue 3 September 2010 pp. 316-318

²³⁹ Joseph L. Bast, Herbert J. Walberg "Can Parents Choose the Best Schools for their Children" *Economics of Education Review* Vol. 23 Issue 4 August 2004 pp. 431-440

²⁴⁰ Stephen Gibbons, Olma Silva "School quality, child wellbeing and parents satisfaction" *Economics of Education Review* Vol. 30 Issue 2 April 2011 pp. 312-331

be an expected difference; The music one listens too is a good indicator of one's ethics as the words contained in the lyrics would represent something that he or she is comfortable with. However, for a 12.48% percentage of admitted Pentecostal Christians to strongly agree and 45.03% to agree that secular music can provide a good pattern for living suggests something is going on in the approach to ethics that is not cut and dry as expected. Timothy Rommen noticed this challenge as he studied ethics in gospel music in the Trinidadian context. He suggests the type of music or style of music preferred by Christians in the Caribbean is more than a preference for the particular arrangement of musical chords and notes, but represents rather a particular approach to ethics that the individual identifies with²⁴¹. Further consideration of this concept stems from the idea that the popular music of a culture or a generation reaches a wide audience and as such becomes a viable vehicle for positive and Christian messages on initial observation. According to Rommen, Christian artists in Trinidad place concern for their fellow citizens as the ethical approach and the impetus in choosing a particular style of music to share the evangelistic message. Rommen writes, "ethical considerations must be satisfied before aesthetic concerns are entertained...[Gospel]artists will say, "I have become all things to all men so that by all means possible I might save some."²⁴² So Rommen's investigation suggests that there is a deliberate effort to use the secular musical space for sacred messages to obtain a noble end of increasing the converted and legitimizing the worship music expression. I believe Rommen's work is

²⁴¹ Timothy Rommen, *Mek Some Noise: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad* University of California Press, Berkeley pp. 27-46

²⁴² Timothy Rommen, *Mek Some Noise: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad* University of California Press, Berkeley pp. 27-46

important because it helps to explain a segment of the Pentecostal population in this study. It demonstrates that there is an approach to ethics that has no problem using what was considered 'devil's territory' by classical or historical Pentecostals. The unexpected finding as noted in table 14, The 18-30 age group has the lowest percentage among all categories in terms of strong agreement and the highest response in "agree" showing a reduced feeling that the religious songs they are hearing every Sunday provide a good pattern for living. The largest amount of uncertainty comes from the males, persons 61+, and the Church of God of Prophecy with each showing 6% of the population sample are unsure about the songs sung in church and its connection to a good pattern for living.

As far as secular songs, there is a large percentage; 45.03%, overall that "agree" music in this category demonstrates examples of a good lifestyle. Table 39 shows the strong agreement is much less in all categories as the range is from 8.14% of the Assemblies of God to 17.8% of the Church of God of Prophecy with all other groups somewhere in between. This range is similar in the "disagree" column with 11.02% of Church of God to 24.18% of the 61+ group. The uncertainty level 17.88% is close to the disagree level of 16.02% indicating a notable hesitation when it comes to secular music being a good source of ethical practice. However, there is a weighty proportion that believes there is some ethical positivity to be found in non-religious music. This Caribbean notion of musical preference being linked to ethics may explain why there is a significant percentage of Pentecostals in the Bahamas indicating that some secular songs are good examples of a positive lifestyle. I would

have expected a stronger aversion to secular music providing positive examples considering the holiness lifestyle Pentecostals have historically adhered to. William Kay's study of Pentecostals in Britain indicates that many of the British Pentecostals were of Caribbean descent and showed a high degree of shunning of social dancing²⁴³. It would follow that the accompanying secular music would similarly be shunned as unethical. I am making the assumption that social dancing would not be accompanied by religious music in this context. Perhaps the closer attachment to strict holiness practices by Caribbean Pentecostals living in Britain could be attributed to the reaction of such a grouping reacting to a new culture and society by insulating themselves through a strong grip of the lifestyle practiced in their original homeland. This method of coping with what may be considered a more liberal society may explain their resistance to be open to new ideas about acceptable ethical practices. On the other hand those Pentecostals living in the Caribbean, in this case the Bahamas, did not have the pressure of a new society and culture to deal with and may be less resistant to changing lifestyle behaviours and or considering other ethical sources as acceptable.

The next section of the questionnaire evaluates who is affected by ethics. It looks at the strength of the ethical sources in terms of respondents desire to have that source affect the society in which they live. The question, "I believe the Bible should influence the laws of the Bahamas" should demonstrate through the results, whether respondents think the 'Bible' as an ethical source is of such priority that it

²⁴³ William Kay, "Pentecostals in Britain," Carlisle: Paternoster 2000 chapter 6

should rise to the level of affecting the laws of the land. Their response would tend to reflect their ideal worldview of how the society should be guided. As noted in table 16, the overall response shows 71.31% strongly agree that the Bible should influence the laws of the Bahamas. Among the categories, 79.38% of the 61+ age group strongly agreed with this statement while in the 18-30 age group only 51.61% indicated this level of intense agreement. So the older persons thought the Bible should have a greater amount of influence on the laws of the land compared to significantly fewer of the younger persons. This result would indicate that the older persons feel a steering away from the Bible in current trends of lawmaking and that a shift towards ethical principles found in the Bible was needed to either keep or bring the nation back to a favourable status, in their opinion, with regards to the laws that govern the citizens of the land. This 71.31% strong agreement overall further points to a belief that the Bible is good for the Bahamas in terms of its governance of the society as well as suggest that the lifestyle offered through the concepts of living contained therein are preferred to the direction of existing trends that are noted to be steadily on the rise. It further suggests that the Bible is the top of the list with regard to personal and public exercises of ethical practice for Bahamian Pentecostals. Accompanying this is the highest amount of uncertainty, 12.9% indicated by the 18-30 age group, compared to all categories with regard to this question. This indicates a hesitation with regard to the Bible influencing the way the citizens are governed. It may also suggest that persons in the 18-30 age group simply have yet to form an opinion in this matter. If the latter is the case then it may mean that the ethical framework may yet be in a fluid form in the minds of

the younger generation and is still open to formative ideas and concepts in contrast to the older generation whose ethical construct may be more rigid in comparison. According to Sikula and Costa, as persons get older they tend to exhibit more strict and conservative ethical views.²⁴⁴ This general belief seems to be applicable in this scenario as the older persons in this survey seem to be more firmly in favour of the Bible influencing the laws of the Bahamas. Sikula and Costa further suggest that this conservatism on the part of older persons stems from more experience of having seen what unethical responses can produce.²⁴⁵ Ruegger and King also found that older age groups were more ethical when compared to the younger age groups. In addition, they found females to be more ethical than males in a business environment.²⁴⁶ I agree with Ruegger and King's summation of the age factor influencing ethical conduct, however, their findings that females are more ethical does not agree with this study because my survey shows no significant difference between the genders in terms of whether they believe the Bible should influence the laws of the Bahamas.

The next question "I believe the Bible should be taught in schools" is an important ethical gauge because people tend to be more discerning when it comes to what they want their children to be taught. I suppose it is part and parcel of the overall

²⁴⁴ Andrew Sikula Sr. and Adelmiro Costa, "Are age and ethics related?" *Journal of Psychology* 1994 Vol. 128 issue 6 p 659

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Durwood Ruegger and Ernest King, "A Study of the Effect of Age and Gender upon Student Business Ethics" *Journal of Business Ethics* Vol. 11, No. 3 (Mar., 1992), pp. 179-186

parenting realm of wanting the best for their offspring and also wanting to protect them from what they perceive may be harmful to their children in some way. I would expect an even stricter or more conservative response to this question from the older persons who find themselves in some sort of guardian role. Overall, 88.69% strongly agree that the Bible should be taught in schools. The highest percentage of strong agreement, 93.75%, was indicated by the 51-60 age group. I would be inclined to expect the general age of childbearing to have an increased response towards intensity to this question along with the timing for when parents become grandparents; simply because these times tend to trigger stronger parenting desires. So this 51-60 age group would likely be the initial grand parenting stage for most participants. I find it interesting that that the initial parenting age [18-30] did not provide the highest level of strong agreement. Even though the difference is small, this initial parenting age group was approximately 7%, below the grand parenting age group in intensity of agreement to the wish to have the Bible taught in schools. Nelson purports that conservative Christians in the U.S. have become disillusioned with the public school system because of a noted emphasis on national concerns or ideas over and above personal or private ideals and lifestyle. She points to the removal of school prayer and school sponsored Bible reading as examples of the drive to marginalize religious influence in the education system.²⁴⁷ Nelson suggests that this phenomenon has triggered an increase in home schooling by parents in order that the values held by a family are preserved and

²⁴⁷ Jeannette Nelson, "Home Education: Exploring the views of parents, children and young people" PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham 2013 p. 26-27

transferred to their children. Indeed this willingness to take on the responsibility of educating children indicates the intense conviction of the importance of lifestyle values being transferred to them. It would not be a stretch to extrapolate that other western hemisphere parents in the Caribbean would display a similar sentiment if faced with similar circumstances.

6.2.4 Significance of Conclusions from survey data on ethical sources

What is unmistakably clear is that Pentecostals in the Bahamas have a strong propensity for the Bible in terms of its authority to govern life and an ability to set the standard for ethics. This indicates there is an overwhelming belief that the Bible is in fact God's word. This level of agreement lends support to the conviction that the Bible is sacred to them. Table 25 shows there was consistency across gender, age groups and denomination in this regard. This strong response level in favor of believing that the Bible is the Word of God sets up an expected foundation for an ethical core grounded in the Bible among Bahamian Pentecostals. I would expect then that the majority of ethical positions preferred or displayed by these Pentecostals would find some familiarity to the concepts and principles found in the Bible. While there are undoubtedly many factors that will influence the final decision of Pentecostals with regard to a particular position on a given issue, the parameters of this study will be limited to the role of the Bible in that decision process. The reason for this can be attributed to the Pentecostal distinctive of the

Bible being the inspired Word of God.²⁴⁸ It is noted that pneumatology has been thrust into the forefront of Pentecostalism, as its predominant defining distinctive.²⁴⁹ However, I agree with Simon Chan that foundational to Pentecostal Theology must be the tempered return to the Biblical Launchpad. He writes, “Pentecostals are too carried away with by their apocalyptic vision. If this vision is not balanced by a nuanced biblical eschatology which maintains the tension between the ‘has come’ and ‘not yet’, a crisis mentality could set in.”²⁵⁰ The perception by many, about Pentecostals is that they are perhaps too otherworldly; to borrow a cliché ‘so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good’. It becomes important for Pentecostalism that Pentecostals be careful to not overemphasize their reliance on the Holy Spirit at the risk of minimizing Biblical priority, if indeed the Bible is the foundation of their ethical expression. Chan’s statement is important to the area of my research in that it helps to keep the reigns of focus on the priority of the Bible. My research focus in this thesis becomes a natural ‘next step’ to determine how Pentecostals engage the Bible.

²⁴⁸ French Arrington, *Pneuma: The Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies* The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals [Vol 16 Spring 1994] 101-107

²⁴⁹ Frank Macchia *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* [Zondervan Grand Rapids, 2006], 21

²⁵⁰ Simon Chan *Pentecostal Theology and The Christian Spiritual Tradition* [Wipf and Stock Eugene, 2000], 116

6.3 Qualitative Study on sources of Ethics

6.3.1 Focus group summary

In terms of this study, the focus group vehicle is expected to provide clarity on the ethical sources participants actually draw from and compare to the ethical positions they declare in response to formal questioning. The investigation of this two-tiered nuance between statement and practice would be valuable in understanding Bahamian Pentecostal practice and perhaps provide a means of comparison to other Pentecostal genres in other parts of the world.

In the session with The Church of God of Prophecy we began by presenting the findings from the survey in response to the question, “How often do you read the Bible?” There appeared to be a view that the percentage found in the Church of God of Prophecy respondents [just under 50%] was below the group’s expectation and the group offered various possible explanations for this. One correspondent, [M1] wondered if perhaps some persons may have misunderstood and assumed the question was referring to the physical book being picked up, opened and read. This opinion offered by [M1] was interesting because it demonstrated a perspective that the physical book held a sacredness separate and apart from the words written within. Dorina Paramenter suggests that despite the fact that Protestant Christianity has shunned ritual objects in an attempt to avoid idol worship, the Bible continues

to exist as a legitimate ritual object in modern Protestant Christian practice.²⁵¹ The basis of the opinion offered by [M1] implies support to this finding by Dorina Paramenter and accordingly, a viable reason as to the possibility of persons understanding the question regarding Bible reading to mean the physical object of the Bible. The opinion by [F1] was that it was “a little shocking” and below expectation because of the increased access to the Bible on Apps available on today’s smart phones. This suggestion by [F1] implies that everyone has a smart phone with Internet access and has downloaded a Bible App on their phone. In my view, this expectation would favour the younger population compared to the older persons who would tend to be less technologically inclined. Christopher Chong agrees with this general sentiment that older persons are less likely to use technology products like mobile phones compared to younger persons.²⁵² [M3] wondered whether persons understood what they were reading. In other words whether or not persons who read the Bible comprehended the principles, concepts and or instructions to the extent that value was being received as a reader. Or was it simply a mechanical reading of words to fill a perceived quota for the day. This observation by [M1] leans into the idea of the Bible being a sacred object in that comprehension was not necessarily a priority but the activity of reading the words

²⁵¹ Myrvold, Kristina, ed. *The Death of Sacred Texts : Ritual Disposal and Renovation of Texts in World Religions*. Farnham, GB: Routledge, 2016. Accessed May 10, 2016. ProQuest ebrary.

²⁵² Christopher Sze Chong, Lim. 2010. "Designing inclusive ICT products for older users: taking into account the technology generation effect." *Journal Of Engineering Design* 21, no. 2/3: 189-206. *Business Source Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 10, 2016).

of the Bible, the physical interaction with the ritual object, was sufficient in terms of religious practice. If this scenario were operating to a notable degree it would imply that other sources of ethics would have a greater impact in that individual's overall ethical worldview because the bible was being used as more of a sacred object instead of a source of ethics. [F2] thought that the younger persons perhaps brought the percentage down because in her estimation they would tend to be more distracted by social media. There could be some of this activity involved because it is generally accepted that that younger persons are more avid users of technological products such a social media and distractions from its usage is thought to be high. So it lends to a reduction in reading the Bible although readily available through an App on their mobile phone. Stony Brooks studied the effects of social media and found that higher amounts of personal social media usage led to lower performance on assigned tasks, as well as increased levels of stress and reduced levels of happiness.²⁵³ These findings support the notion that social media is a distraction to its users.

The group was asked, "Do you think the bible should influence the laws of the country?" [F3] said yes if we consider ourselves as a Christian nation. This response by [F3] is alluding to public commentary concerning the status of the Bahamas as a Christian nation. It was generally assumed to be the case, particularly due to the high degree of tethering of constitutional documents to biblical concepts. In

²⁵³ Stony Brooks, "Does personal social media usage affect efficiency and well-being?" [Computers in Human Behavior Volume 46](#), May 2015, Pages 26–37

particular the Preamble to the constitution of the Bahamas which includes the following, “the People of this Family of Islands recognizing that the preservation of their Freedom will be guaranteed by a national commitment to Self discipline, Industry, Loyalty, Unity and an abiding respect for Christian values.”²⁵⁴

[F1] Says, other ideologies are creeping into the society. [F2] Yes the Bible should guide our laws, even though the world is putting pressure on the country to be more flexible and she sees the country changing to accommodate these varied views and the Bible simultaneously being slowly pushed aside. [M1] “Its scary to think the way the scripture may be interpreted” by the powers that be to influence the laws of the country. [M2] the Bible is important and should guide the laws of the land. The society continues to move the goal post in terms of standards. These responses by the group indicate a preference for the Bible to be a major influencer of the laws of the country but recognize the external pressures of the world’s societies that seek to broaden the inclusion of other concepts and minimize the Biblical impact. The response by [M2] that society continues to move the goal post of standards is an indication of this pressure to change and adopt new ethics. Interestingly, with this perception of the ethical standards being moved to accommodate varying views and opinions from the world’s stage, there remains a high level of disagreement within Bahamian Pentecostalism to the idea that it is okay to do anything I feel is okay as long as it doesn’t hurt anyone. Disagreement ranged from 27.22% to 36.67% and strong disagreement ranged from 31.9% to 53.16% across all categories examined. The focus of the self as a preferred source of ethics by the post-modern worldview,

²⁵⁴ Preamble to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, 1973

can be demonstrated by the field of medicine where, in Western societies self-determination has become the priority in the delivery or non-delivery of medical treatment. Arthur Derse writes, “the World Medical Association has incorporated the value of self-determination in its Code of Ethics stating, “A physician shall respect a competent patient’s right to accept or refuse treatment.”²⁵⁵ In such a significant arena of health care where life and death hang in the balance of ethical practice it would not be a surprise to see this concept make its way into other areas of life where ethics has a role. So the idea of self, becoming the focus of ethics supports the idea that as long as self does not hurt anyone else its choices are acceptable. Pentecostals from the survey however do not agree with this as well as the general consensus from the focus group.

When asked, “How does this make you feel as a Pentecostal with the world putting pressure to change and accommodate these societal views?” [M3] Says the Bible will not change, and it is no surprise that the world is headed this way because the Bible warns us that this would happen. But we ought rely on the scripture that says, “Be not conformed to the things of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” [F2] Pentecostals must maintain standards, the younger may have more of a struggle, whereas our generation, the 40-50 age bracket, have more stability and must bridge the gap to help the younger Pentecostals maintain their identity. This statement by [F2] is significant in that it reflects a strong push back against

²⁵⁵ Henri Colt, Silvia Quadrelli, and Friedman Lester The Picture of Health: Medical Ethics and the Movies, 2011 Oxford Scholarship

elements that are perceived as diluting the identity of Pentecostals. It is this identity, which we are seeking to describe in terms of ethical formation and practice that is being notably protected not only in the present circumstances, but also for future generations. Kimberley Alexander writes, "Pentecostalism in general, and Pentecostal scholarship in particular, finds itself at an intersection of ultimate significance. We stand at the crossroads between worlds and are being offered appealing deal(s). Will we sell our (heart and) soul for perceived respectability and proficiency that is short-lived and leads to a shameful grave? Or will we return, like the Prodigal, to our essential roots, either hanging up the tools of the Tricksters or sanctifying them and rewriting the words? Will we write our own songs and sing them our way?" Her remarks stem from an analogous expression of Pentecostalism in terms of American indigenous Blues music that looks at whether or not the identity of the movement will pursue a strengthening of the tether to its origins. I agree that Pentecostal identity is being challenged towards assimilation into mainstream orthodoxy, however I would suggest that at least from the average Pentecostal the issue may not be so much the temptation of being accepted by scholarly circles as legitimate, but rather their urgency of preservation comes from a genuine belief and commitment to the Bible as God's presence with them and that a movement away from the centrality of the Bible is viewed as movement away from God.

[F3] The way the scripture is presented to the next generation is important to help reinforce these standards. We may be losing the younger generation because of outdated approaches. Ed Setter surveyed young Protestant adults and found that

the reason given for 52% dropping out of church was related to ethics, religious or political beliefs. Specifically, 18 % disagreed with the church's stance on political or social issues.²⁵⁶

From these responses there appears to be an acceptance of the fact that the society, the nation as a whole will continue on a path that is oriented towards the rest of the world's ethics, however the level of concern was significantly greater when it came to maintaining Pentecostal identity and legacy in terms of the next generation.

There was a heightened level of interest in figuring out what could be done to keep the younger people interested and committed to Pentecostalism. The importance of transferring ethics to offspring and youth in general was viewed as a priority. [F1] said, I see us as Pentecostals remaining firm in the way we believe. The other denominations {meaning non-Pentecostal denominations} are more liberal; they are ok with playing numbers and social drinking. [M3] Says, Church of God of Prophecy has evolved over the last 30-40 years. "We have struggled with Biblical foundation versus church doctrine" We used to be against going to the movies. [F2] Said the movie War Room is out now and wondered if her mother would go with her and her family to watch it considering the church doctrine/culture of her generation advised against going to the movies. Interestingly she said that when her parents travelled to the U.S. they had no problem going to the movies but here in the Bahamas it was taboo. [F3] Says, "I remember telling my father these same movies you are watching on TV are the same movies that are being shown in the movie theatre so why can't

²⁵⁶ Ed Stetzer The Real Reasons Young Adults drop out of Church The Exchange Blog 2014

we go and watch it before it comes on TV, what is the difference?" She continues, The Church's doctrine had a strong influence i.e. the document "Advice to members" took moral precedence. This portion of the discussion points to a particular focus of Pentecostalism in terms of its ethical construct. The document "Advice to Members" was put forth by the church as an ethical roadmap to lifestyle practices for its members. As a result it took on a major role in how Pentecostalism was practiced in earlier years. There is a notable de-emphasis nowadays in terms of its prominence that is indicative of a shift of ethical sourcing.

The group was asked, "Has there been a shift towards the Bible by Pentecostals compared to the earlier emphasis on Church doctrine/policy?" [F3] says the Church back then interpreted the scripture out of context to support a church doctrine/policy. [M2] Our parents and grandparents took what the Elders, Bishops, Pastors said as "gospel" without question. But this generation now questions and looks for the biblical support. I think we should reason this out and get an understanding of the scripture. These responses indicate the shifting of ethical sourcing from the leadership and church policy towards the Bible. This is interesting because the Bible has historically been the focal point of Pentecostalism but what appears to have happened is that a heavier reliance on leadership to interpret the Bible has led to a realization of anomalies in practice that do not agree with principles suggested in the Bible. This created an atmosphere of questioning what was being put forth by the church as doctrine. This then apparently led to a general feeling that a more direct connection to the Bible was needed in order to

stay true to the faith. This movement in ethics argues for a progressive Pentecostalism that is not engulfed in emotionalism and experiential priority at the expense of cognitive self-evaluation leading to change in practice.

[M3] If we don't stand on biblical principles society will influence us more and more it is important to have the right motive toward the activities we participate in.

If any other complex issue comes up what sources would you use [F2] The Bible

[M3] there is nothing that we can't find in the Bible to address every possible issue.

It may have to be searched for but it is there. [F2] We still hold to the scriptures.

[F1] If you don't know Jesus you would be in trouble, you need that foundation.

[M3] As a suggestion we as a church should strive to do more of this small group type meeting. With this open dialogue we learn more and are improved as a congregation and strengthened in what we believe.

This focus group gave much insight into their ethical process that begins and ends with the Bible as the main contributor to their ethical construct. Notably, there was concern for proper interpretation of the scripture and application of appropriate contexts for the principles that were to be applied to daily issues. There was an underlying stability of confidence in ability of the Bible to provide the needed guidance, even though it may not be spelled out, but through diligent searching a suitable and acceptable position on ethical issues be they complex or new was believed to be at hand in the Bible.

The church of God focus group was asked, where do you think your ethics comes from? A male replied, [M1] "The Bible is the centerpiece of the Pentecostals even more so than the law of the land." This response suggests a hierarchy of ethical authority in this respondent's view such that if there were a contradiction between the Bible and the laws of the land, the biblical perspective would take precedent. A female says, [F1] "Our values are derived from the older people in the church that were passed down. I was christened a Catholic, confirmed in the Anglican Church and I'm now baptized as a Pentecostal. I pattern my life around our declaration of faith that was passed down over the years. The Bible is the nucleus but the values passed down from the older persons who have experienced things plays a big role in my ethics." The religious history and of this individual is remarkable in scope and illuminates an important means of ethical transfer and development. She states the Bible is the "nucleus" suggesting all values and lifestyle decisions need to have support from the Bible but what I find interesting is that filtering of the Bible through the senior church members in terms of practical experience with life issues and how questions of ethics were handled in their time, serves as a gold standard of acceptable ethical practice for now. There is great value placed on how previous generations handled tough topics and much trust is placed in the struggle and conclusions arrived at as a result. This confidence is sufficiently strong such that what the older persons say need not be reexamined but accepted. This acceptance then presents building blocks upon which an ethical construct is formed. Notably this respondent brings with her the religious history of older persons from two mainline denominations that have inserted their biblical perspectives into what is

now her Pentecostal ethical construct. With this in mind, and considering the fact that many of the new centers of Pentecostal development took place within the traditional mainline churches, the Pentecostal ethic is more complex in terms of maturity and expression than perhaps heretofore considered. Graham Smith writes, “charismatic movements...widely penetrated the traditional historical churches from the 1960s, both Protestant and Catholic, in what has been termed the charismatic renewal.”²⁵⁷ Indeed the charismatic renewal movement has been well documented. However it would be naive to think that as a result of the Pentecostal experience taking place within the walls of the Anglican and Catholic churches that all prior knowledge and experience in these mainline churches would be done away with. Rather, I feel there is a rephrasing of their theology and worldview to now include the Pentecostal experience. Similarly, their means of tackling questions of ethics would follow this same approach. In many instances it is perhaps not solely an independent line of development but a series of adaptations, selections and deletions having its tether firmly connected to the Bible. [F2] The board /hierarchy of the church who makes the rules have adjusted their strict external focus on appearance towards allowing a more relaxed atmosphere in order to accommodate and not drive away the younger persons within the church. For example, in earlier times we could not wear jewelry like what I have on now and it was mandatory to have your head covered as a female in order to go up on the pulpit, but now these restrictions have been relaxed. (I think these views could not be biblically defended so the ethics of the church had to evolve around what could be defended by the

²⁵⁷ Graham Russell Smith, *The Church Militant: A Study of “Spiritual Warfare” in the Anglican Charismatic Renewal* PhD Thesis University of Birmingham 2011

Bible in order to prevent the younger persons from leaving.) [F3] The core values are Bible based and one of our declarations of faith is that we believe the Bible. [M2] I try to follow the laws of the New Testament I don't look at what the other person chooses to do, I say, What would Jesus Do? I worship daily not just on Sunday; I cover my family in prayer. My kids have gotten to a point where they ask me to pray for them. Today I am rejoicing because I was carrying my daughter's mortgage for 3 years and today I got a call that she got a job so this is how I live and I thank God. Whatever we go through in life it is only a test everything will be all right.

How often do you think the bible should be read? [F2] At one point I used to read everyday but I need to get back. [F3] I read a daily devotion that has Bible verses to keep me in tune and prepared in case an opportunity to say something uplifting to someone else arises [M2] I read the Bible everyday 1.5 hours and I like to associate with positive people who speak the word and live the word. God's word has said these issues would come about like the gay movement so I'm not surprised. [F1] Because we don't read the Bible we are unaware that all these issues we are facing were predicted. Some people just read the bible to say they have read the Bible but don't understand what it means and so it does nothing for them. Its how we react to what is happening I don't read everyday but I read other books that have spiritual support that helps me through the day. When I start my day I get my cup of coffee and then I read my word from either Daily Bread or a book from Rick Warren I'm reading the purpose driven life and then I'm able to handle the stress of the day. [M1] Not as often as I should or would like, however as you get older you become

seasoned with verses over the time and the scriptures become a part of you. With the advent of technology it is easier to access scriptures we can download the bible as well as some of our social media groups persons send out scripture verses. Its up to us to take advantage of the technology and access the scripture.

Within the Church of God, 50% of respondents said they read the bible everyday. 34% said weekly 6.3 % said monthly 8.6% read only if there was a need. It would interesting to compare Bible reading with other denominations such as Catholics Methodists or Baptists I would be surprised if other denominations scored as high as the Pentecostals.

[F2] I think that percentage is good because it told me that perhaps the young people are reading their Bible[F3] I wonder why people read the Bible based on how church people conduct themselves I wonder if they read to just make a show or are they reading it to conduct their lives.

Across the entire surveyed population there was a difference between the genders. Among the Males, 43% read daily and 37% read weekly. Among the females 56% said they read daily and read 32% weekly. Why do think this is? F3 Women get more stress than men and tend to go to the Bible for encouragement instead of possibly creating a bigger problem by talking to someone else[M1] is it because the male wants work it out for himself, rely on his own resources. F2 Men don't like to read in general, Do you think this is cultural? F2 My cousin's father likes to read for recreation "Guinness" in one hand and Bible in the other or a newspaper he simply liked to read {is the reason just to read or to have what is read impact you}[M1] Does it have to do with academics in that females were more literate [F1]

Historically, back then the men on the island were more concerned with survival and providing for their families so reading was not a priority. They went fishing having left school at an early age in order to take care of the family. I know as a little girl living on the island the pastor could not read and someone read the scripture aloud as he preached. The congregation accepted this practice as a style rather than an inability to read. [M1] Are you saying that is the reason for the current survey difference? [F1] no but I think it had an influence in the culture that may contribute to what we are seeing. [F2] in the ministry of education there are fewer males than females [M2] The island that I descended from many men could not read but they had a memory like an elephant. [suggesting that the men perhaps could not read but that was not an indication of intelligence]

Do you think the bible should influence the laws of the country?

[F2] I feel it should, a lot of stuff would not be happening if this were so. If you loved your neighbor as the Bible suggests, why would you want to rob, kill or rape your neighbor? [M1] It would give us a better set of laws. Do you think other religious documents have some merit such that as a Pentecostal you would accept a part of it? [M1] I can believe a part without believing the whole. [F1] I think so I think some other religions may have some positive things and have positive parts. [F2] You don't have to believe in the Bible to accept that there are some things that are good and positive in the book

What are some of your sources of ethics? F2 Your parents teach you from young the difference between right and wrong, in school, church, the work place. [F2] A lot of persons who commit crimes know its wrong but still do wrong. [F1] If growing up if parents curse then the children will curse and think nothing wrong with it. I think it must be taught. [M2] I personally believe God put an instinct in us where we can know right from wrong. Just like Jeremiah from the womb God had called Him. [F3] I believe everyone is born innocent if there were no laws we would not know what is right and wrong. The Bible has the lifestyle men ought to live, how you judge cases, how families ought to live, the way we ought to conduct business and avoid crooks, I believe everything that you need in this life is in the Bible.

The Assemblies of God focus group was asked, Where do you get your ethics and values? [F1] From my parents [F2] as you get older you look in the Bible you learn for yourself [M1] if it is not covered in the Bible I think innately we are born with an understanding of what is right and wrong [F2] No, I don't think so because [according to scripture] foolishness is in the heart of a child. I don't think the Bible is the only moral compass, God can do something with us today that could be used to help future generations concerning issues that the Bible may not address. This is an interesting concept put forth by [F2], that God's presence and influence can operate beyond the written scripture in terms of teaching principles of living through experiences we encounter that become ethical moments for future generations to learn from.

Would you pass on the same ethics and values that was what was passed on to you?

[F2] If it was right for example My parents gave offerings but never paid tithes then when I read the Bible I told them they should pay their tithe and they did.

[M1] We know better we just don't stick to it when it comes to tithes.

What do you think about the importance of reading the Bible?

[F2] if you want to have a closer relationship with God you will read more

From the survey of Assemblies of God sample 55% said they read the Bible daily, 31% said weekly and 9.1% only if there was a need

[F1] I think that's fair

[F1] There are consequences to our decisions. I grew up Baptist and I was under a heavy weight of right and wrong, heaven and hell but when I got older and I looked at the scripture myself I learned its about a relationship with God such that I don't have that sin burden. It's when we go outside the principles of God that we reap consequences. By the sweat of your brow you shall eat

[M2] A lot of the churches are ineffective today: the churches of yesteryear used to help one another even though they are taking in a lot of money nowadays it seems that churches are more concerned about having big beautiful edifices so why go to church I can watch Joel Osteen or Charles Stanley and get the same message or even a better message on TV.

[F2] I go to church and go back out the same way; all of my major finds [ethical principles] were from my personal search of the Scriptures. I didn't get it from the pulpit, I don't understand their messages, I don't know whom they are talking to and

I guess that's why a lot of people leave the same way they came. The Bible says not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together; This setting we are in now, talking and engaging is what church ought to be. When I go to church I sit down, hear the message and go back home. Do you think that is what God intended?

[M1] Fellowship did not take place, you came sat down heard something and left. That's not 'assembling together.' Assembling is fellowship not just shaking hands. If you have a need lets see how we can meet that need.

[F2] I feel that persons who preach from the Bible are not breaking it down for the individual, they are above everyone. So I expect even as a Christian we ought to be convicted by the Word of God to live better. [F1] ...but I'm not getting that.

More women, approximately 10% more, read the Bible compared to the men according to the survey. Why do you think about this?

[F1] I don't think men value the Word of God as much as women because they are busy with work

[F2] Men don't think they need to ask for help

[M2] I could have a father or brother and we would not share deep personal things men are conditioned not to show weakness

[F2] Women would very easily share their personal situations with one another

[M2] in church the men would not show emotion like the women.

6.3.2 Conclusions from focus group discussions

As the focus group discussions developed there arose a consistent theme of the centrality of the Bible in determining the ethical positions Pentecostals will take on

any given issue. Considering this study is new to the Bahamas as far as any direct investigation on ethics of Pentecostals in the Bahamian context, the research process itself was a sort of awakening to the participants that cued them in on the larger picture of their existence and purpose as a Pentecostal Christian. The process was welcomed because it was viewed as an opportunity to make a difference and air thoughts ideas, opinions and concerns regarding the current as well as future progress of the faith. It was even suggested that this forum was something that should be considered by the church as a means to strengthen the members and encourage in a more tangible way each other. It was further suggested that it was a better means of communicating the tenets of the faith as opposed to relying solely on the Sunday morning sermon.

The focus group discussions revealed and allowed a more comprehensive perspective as to why some responses went in a particular direction. For example the question about Bible reading showed a lower rate among men compared to women. The explanations as to why this occurred included the cultural impact of life for men being the primary income earner in the household predisposed them to be more concerned about work and have less time for reading. It was also suggested that there might be a literacy issue involved to some extent. Further, it was also suggested that men as a species don't like to ask for help because it tends to make them feel weak. So even if they are in need it would take a whole lot of pushing before they seek assistance. Allusions were made to the stereotype that men who are lost have a difficulty in asking for directions. This created a light

moment of laughter in the discussion. Further to this, the Bible is seen as a help so there may be a bit of a mental block that is gender specific whereas women seem to have no problem sharing their problems and getting help. As far as other sources of ethics beyond the Bible, what also came out of the discussions was the influence of parents and grandparents who passed on traditions and principles that the participants say they adhere to even now. They did mention a filtering in some cases of those principles to adapt to their particular worldview but they appreciated the spirit or the intent of the efforts made by parents to steer them in the right direction so that they would make good ethical judgments.

6.3.3 Comparisons with Quantitative data

For the most part the focus groups corroborated what the survey responses revealed and there was a good support for the responses received on the questionnaire. The Bible coming out as the primary source for Pentecostals in the Bahamas to use as a first place of reference was strongly exhibited on the survey when respondents were asked if they believed that the Bible was the Word of God. The overwhelming response in the strongly agree category was an immediate indicator of how the other bible related questions might go. There was an interestingly proportionately milder response level when asked if there they thought the bible is the only source of ethics they would engage. This milder response was explained in the additional questions asking if they thought their pastor, schoolteacher, parents or friends could provide ethical guidance. The answer was yes to varying degrees with parents topping the list of alternative sources for

ethical practice. This proportionate value of parents as an ethical source in addition to the Bible, was also confirmed by the focus group participants who readily gave stories of how their parents and or grandparents influenced their lives.

The question of bible reading was selected to be a part of the survey because it is an activity that that requires a certain level of devotion to the faith. It is not usually something that is picked up for entertainment purposes like a novel but rather it is read for a purpose. And that purpose often relates to the individual's faith in God. Bible reading is used in this study as a gauge of whether or not responses indicating that the Bible was a primary source of ethics was in actuality adhered to in terms of practical action: a sort of measuring the double standard often found between the ideal and the practical; what we say we do, and what is actually done. This difference came out in the focus group discussion where individuals confessed to not reading as much as they ought and that in reality with the advancement of technology there is even easier access than before; as simple as downloading a Bible App that can even send Scriptures daily to your cell-phone.

6.4 Conclusions--How Bahamian Pentecostals go about thinking about ethical challenges.

The Bahamian is first of all a unique aggregate of cultures including African, European and American components that have blended with indigenous traits to produce a friendly mix of colorful personalities expressed through lifestyle. It should be noted that within the Bahamian culture is a strong sense of musical involvement in the way of life on the islands. From the many venues that include this genre as a

part of their ‘thing’ you will hear a cocktail of African rhythms, Caribbean calypso, English folk songs and native Goombay and Junkanoo sounds.²⁵⁸ Even as Edmund and Rebecca Barr in November of 1909 and R.M. Evans and associates in January of 1910 arrived on the shores of the Bahamas to share the Pentecostal message they brought not only the 1906 Azusa Street Revival brand of spirituality but also the cultural practices that were endemic to their American background. Included in this was a musical band that had a tremendous impact on the missionary efforts on the islands. It is reasonable to see the resonance of music with the Bahamians in being receptive to the Pentecostal message based on their musically saturated heritage. The lyrics proclaim the hope that draws them in, and the melodies soothe their apprehension and creates a sense of enjoyment. According to the diaries of A. J. Tomlinson the first General Overseer of the Church of God, band music was used as a part of the mission efforts to attract the Bahamians to attend the revival services.²⁵⁹ Timothy Rommen in his book *“Mek some Noise”* discusses a model of ethical reflection he calls the ethics of style that looks at the genre of music having the ability to inform the identity of the persons engaged in a particular form or rhythm. In particular he was looking at the Trinidadian Full Gospel Community, which has Pentecostal components, and how their brand of gospel music has been nuanced to fit their ethical construct and communal identity²⁶⁰. Although his context is in Trinidad, I see his work as important to this research and find it to be

²⁵⁸ Bahamas.com Our Customs [accessed 25 February, 2018]

²⁵⁹ A. J. Tomlinson *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1924* [White Wing Publishing House 2012], 160-161

²⁶⁰ Timothy, Rommen, *Mek some Noise: Gospel Music and The Ethics of Style in Trinidad*, University of California Press 2007

applicable to the Bahamian context as another Caribbean country with similarities from a cultural and religious perspective. More than that, in reflecting on the significant role music plays in the identity of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas today in terms of iconic sounds coupled with lyrics derived from the hymns of the faith, the ethics of musical style could be helpful to assist in informing the Bahamian Pentecostal identity in terms of ethical expression in a format not traditionally considered. From the time when A.J. Tomlinson established a ministry model, of band music provided by foreign missionaries to assist in propagation efforts of the Pentecostal message when they arrived in the Bahamas, the seed had taken root in the Pentecostal community.²⁶¹ Approximately 15 years later, the Bahamas Brass Band was formed by Bahamian Pentecostals.²⁶² Since that time there has been band music playing the hymns most often from *Banner Hymns*, *Hymns of Glorious Praise* and *Harmonies of Heaven*. Songs noted as anthems of the band include, “Amazing Grace, Stand up for Jesus, Victory in Jesus and Blessed Assurance.”²⁶³ These were the hymns most often associated with The Church of God and the Church of God of Prophecy throughout its history. They play at just about all major events and services related to the church: including Baptismal parades, funerals, and concerts. What is unique is the distinctive sound that is readily identifiable as the Church of God/Church of God of Prophecy band. Sean Gibson writes, “ The band is often mistaken as a New Orleans marching band...because of horn phrasing, Jazz note

²⁶¹ A. J. Tomlinson *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson 1901-1924* [White Wing Publishing House 2012], 160-161

²⁶² Sean Gibson, *The Making of a Band: A History of the World Famous Bahama Brass Band*, Bloomington, Authorhouse 2012

²⁶³ Sean Gibson, *The Making of a Band: A History of the World Famous Bahama Brass Band*, Bloomington, Authorhouse 2012 p. 37

embellishments and rhythm section swing.”²⁶⁴ When combined with the lyrics that reinforce the Pentecostal worldview, this becomes an integral component of the ethical model operating in the Bahamian context. For example, the lyrics from “Victory in Jesus”²⁶⁵ give a synopsis of the process of salvation, a nod to the healing distinctive and a mention of the eschatological hope ingrained in the Pentecostal worldview.

I heard an old, old story,
How a Savior came from glory,
How He gave His life on Calvary
To save a wretch like me;
I heard about His groaning,
Of His precious blood's atoning,
Then I repented of my sins
And won the victory.

Chorus

O victory in Jesus,
My Savior, forever.
He sought me and bought me
With His redeeming blood;
He loved me ere I knew Him
And all my love is due Him,
He plunged me to victory,
Beneath the cleansing flood.

I heard about His healing,
Of His cleansing pow'r revealing.
How He made the lame to walk again
And caused the blind to see;
And then I cried, "Dear Jesus,
Come and heal my broken spirit,"
And somehow Jesus came and bro't
To me the victory.

²⁶⁴ Sean Gibson, *The Making of a Band: A History of the World Famous Bahama Brass Band*, Bloomington, Authorhouse 2012 p. 37

²⁶⁵ E.M. Bartlett, Victory in Jesus in *Baptist Hymnal* 1991 #426

I heard about a mansion
He has built for me in glory.
And I heard about the streets of gold
Beyond the crystal sea;
About the angels singing,
And the old redemption story,
And some sweet day I'll sing up there
The song of victory.

Understanding this link to the ethical framework of Bahamian Pentecostals underscores the value of music to the identity of Bahamian Pentecostalism, it becomes necessary to include this ethic of lyrics and musical style in the equation of plotting the Pentecostal ethic in the Bahamian setting.

6.4.1 Pentecostal Ethical Model [PEM]

In contemplating the process of how the Bahamian Pentecostal goes about thinking about ethical challenges I have gathered sufficient data to suggest a model of how this happens. The method involves a series of filters that need to be passed in order for the issue to be permissible in the individual's worldview. These filters are the various sources of ethics that are valued in the individual's life. Many times the filters may never need to be engaged but their existence becomes noticeable whenever they are challenged in some way. It is my view that these filters are developed over the life of an individual and are under constant modification in terms of thinning or thickening according to the experiences of the individual. This modification is often a deliberation process where the issue is debated within the parameters of existing filters and new information that needs processing is added. The individual must then make a conscious decision to allow or disallow the issue

based on evidence that is considered acceptable. So what may once have been considered unacceptable can further down the road become acceptable if the new information encountered is considered viable. The final decision though, still remains deliberate at the conscious level of the individual. We all must choose and decide because we are free-thinking autonomous people, however the battle truly belongs to the filters in one's life. This is why the need for parental guidance is encouraged for the proper rearing of children because they have no filters at the earliest stages of life. These filters must be added through training, teaching, personal experience and modeling of mentors and the overall maturation process. This same principle applies to the Pentecostal convert, they must be trained, mentored and taught to develop the filters that are a part of the Pentecostal identity and worldview. It is perhaps due to the different levels of maturation in terms of Pentecostal identity that there is a natural two-tiered ethic that develops. One is the stated or public presentation of what is expected as a Pentecostal and the second tier is what is actually done and practiced, based on the maturity of the individual in terms of being Pentecostal. To put another way, the development of the sources of ethics that are valued by the individual have a direct influence on the individual's ethical construct and practice. There is a second part of the model that is tethered through a delicate connection from the inner conscience that connects the outer filters and supports each of these filters keeping them alert and constant. This second part is the Spiritual connection that directly energizes and strengthens the resolve of the individual to remain committed to the values of the various filters as long as they are consistent with the overarching primary filter of the Bible. This

spiritual connection interacting with the interpretation of biblical concepts represents the pneumatological and hermeneutical supports within this ethical model. What is important to note here is that the primary filter of the Bible informs of the limitation of pneumatological and by extension hermeneutical support operating in this ethical model due to simple awareness of ethical principles operating within the Biblical source itself. Romans 10:17 "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." In other words, the faith of an individual in terms of what is stated as well as practiced, is directly impacted by the awareness of ethical principles lodged in the scriptures. This awareness can fall to one or all of the sources of ethics utilized by the individual that has informed on the subject or issue of concern. This point becomes important when considering the question of ecotheology and the role it plays in the Pentecostal way of being.

The third part of the model is the music and its lyrics that inform or reinforce the pneumatological and hermeneutical supports with an added benefit of enjoyment with the results of that interaction that provides an assuring comfort of what would be done or practiced by the individual.

In putting a descriptive representation of the Bahamian Pentecostal Ethical Model, we can visualize this archetypal in terms of a series of concentric circular layers of a cone that is broader as you approach the bottom or primary layer of the Bible that contains within its middle the conscious decision-making center of the individual. This center floats in the conscience of the individual so that if a decision is about to be made that disturbs the conscience it can be immediately altered unless

overridden by some other factor. This center is where the spiritual activity takes place that directs the conscience to be settled or disturbed by what is before it. The primary and overarching filter is the Bible, which is the last filter that must be passed because it is the most valued. In order for a particular practice or issue to be considered for debate within the decision making center and accepted or rejected, the Bible filter must allow it. Immediately next to this is the layer of parental guidance in a somewhat smaller layer of the cone moving upwards, then, Pastoral influence, and Personal teachers. This pattern of concentric layers of filters can continue according to the number of sources of ethics considered valuable to the individual. The diameter of these layers reflects the value of the source to the individual such that if two sources were equal in value, then they would be the same diameter. The third component to the model is that of the realm of music and its accompanying lyrics informing the ethical filters that are present. This particular part functions a little differently from the other filters because it is also impacted by the filters themselves having to be approved because of external sourcing and in turn reinforces or thickens the filter layers. It is not a layer but an orbiting pod of potential value that moves in and out of the conical model being firstly filtered and then informing and supporting. This orbiting pod is the 'ethics of music'; the type of music and lyrics the individual listens to and participates in. According to the quantitative survey it includes both religious based music as well as some secular songs in terms of having ethical value to the Pentecostal in this context.

This model I have described is a result of participant observations, quantitative and qualitative data obtained and critically analyzed to research the ethics of Pentecostals in the Bahamas. So using this model lets see if we can imagine how Bahamian Pentecostals might think about an emerging ethical issue: a response to the ecological crisis?

6.5 Imagining the Pentecostal response to the ecological crisis.

Ecology is that branch of biology that involves a navigation of relationships between plants, animals, people, and their surroundings²⁶⁶. In other words, the protection of the environment is sought in a way that sustains all living organisms. Considering the context of the Bahamas as an archipelagic nation of 700 islands with beautiful ecosystems of land, sea, and air, this topic of the environment is one that should be fairly high on the national agenda of the nation in order to preserve its beauty for future generations. In terms of where the Bahamian Pentecostal would stand on this issue let us activate the ethical model created from the two previous studies on the debated subjects of gambling and same-sex marriage and see if we can predict a general position.

The model begins with a series of filters that represent ethical sources that have to be considered in succession before arriving at the decision-making center. The first filter encountered would probably be from teachers and the values they left with their students who would remind us on contemplation or reflection, about the environment. I can imagine from a geography class that perhaps a discussion or

²⁶⁶ Collins dictionary.com [accessed 25 February,2018]

lesson on the topic would be a part of the curriculum alluding to the impact of littering on the environment as well as the tourism industry. Noting that no tourist wants to spend their money to come to a dirty environment filled with litter and dilapidation. Particularly since tourism is the country's largest industry providing economic fuel to the nation. From my own experience I am aware of a particularly environmentally keen program at "The Island School" on the island of Eleuthera in the Bahamas. The existence of this school is indicative of the growing awareness of the environment by Bahamians that initiatives such as this are needed to sustain the economy and maintain the beauty of the environment that tourists pay a premium to enjoy. The Island School is geared towards preparing students to be a part of the solution of the global ecological crisis:

The next generation must be prepared to make difficult decisions about sustaining the valuable resources of our planet. Our green campus allows students, educators and scientists to live what we teach. The buildings and grounds at The Island School incorporate systems and design principles that minimize our ecological footprint through the conservation of collected resources like energy and water. Our campus's Center for Sustainable Development is constantly innovating to improve our sustainable systems on the Cape. Ongoing projects include:

- Biodiesel production plant to run all campus vehicles
- Cisterns for rain water collection
- Solar panels and solar hot water heaters
- Wind turbine
- Aquaponics for the dining hall's leafy greens
- Poo-poo garden processes and recycles human waste to fertilize plants at the center of campus
- Biodigester for fertilizer production
- Pigs, goats, ducks and chickens that consume dining hall food waste²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ The Island School, About Us, islandschool.org [accessed 25 February, 2018]

The Island School is the first environmentally driven school in the Bahamas designed to teach sustainable living to students. This is an example of efforts being made in the country to improve the environmental impact of development and promote solutions for greener and environmentally friendly lifestyles.

Looking at the next layer of the PEM [Pentecostal ethical model] is the parental influence. It is highly likely that parents taught their children how to keep their surroundings clean; from cleaning up their room to doing chores around the house like washing dishes and yard-work, even reusing towels and sheets until necessary for laundering. The next layer is the core foundational layer of the Bible that has an example from the beginning in Genesis of 'Adam' farming and caring for the environment called Eden²⁶⁸. Based on this preliminary imagination I believe this topic would not find much if any resistance to supporting efforts to help improve or sustain the environment. The orbiting 'ethics of music' pod of the PEM [Pentecostal Ethical Model] is noted in a popular local artist who wrote several songs about the environmental issues affecting the Bahamas. KB sings, "I don't get it, I don't understand, why the government does give away our land ... Y'all voted yes on the PSA [Public Subdivisions Act], now 'dat y'all in power, you wanna' take it way ... You shouldn't change the rules when they don't suit you, you shouldn't change the law just for the few." PSA or Public Subdivisions Act refers to land use rights and responsibilities and the need for an environmental impact assessment for all developments.²⁶⁹ Another song related to the bay waters and their protection he

²⁶⁸ Genesis 2:15

²⁶⁹ The Nassau Guardian, KB's latest song tackles Planning and Subdivision Act, 7 March, 2016 [accessed 27 February, 2018]

sings, "Rise up, Bahamas, Let your voices blaze, Stand up, Bahamas, come on let's Save The Bays, God gave us this land, and this land we must save, Stand up, Bahamas, come on let's Save The Bays."²⁷⁰ Another popular local Bahamian artist Geno-D wrote the theme song for the campaign 'Size Matters' to preserve the Spiny Lobster from being over fished and done in a sustainable fashion. The theme is encouraging fishermen to not harvest Spiny Lobsters that do not meet the requirement of 5.5 inches tail length to ensure they are sufficiently mature and have had an opportunity to reproduce at least once.²⁷¹

As a participant observer not having heard much if any from the pastoral sources with regards to this subject of ecological awareness and or responsibility, I would not expect to see much in terms of a polarizing response in either direction from my research data. I expect if there is an awareness it came about through other sources the participant deemed valuable. Accordingly, I don't think this subject would be viewed as a part of the Pentecostal mandate or way of being in the world on the basis of a lack of informed mentoring.

²⁷⁰ savethebays.bs, Popular Bahamian Artist Backs Save the Bays with New Song, 29 May, 2013 [accessed 27 February, 2018]

²⁷¹ d'Shan Maycock, Spiny Lobster Conservation in Abaco friendsoftheenvironment.org [accessed 10 January 2018]

7. The Ecological Crisis as a Challenge [Test Subject]

7.1 Study from the literature

7.1.1 Context

In addition to the 700 islands of the Bahamas, there are some 2500 islets or cays stretched across 100,000 square miles of ocean. Altogether the islands consist of 5,385 square miles of land. Practically all of the islands are surrounded by coral reefs and sandbanks and generally the islands are fairly flat or some may have a few elevations. A large number of the islands are dotted with Blue Holes that are water-filled, circular caverns that open to underground and submarine caves. Some are as much as 600ft deep. There are some 1370 species of plants and trees scattered around the islands and Pine forests notably dominate the northern and western most islands. Humpback and blue whales are often spotted to the east of the islands along with bottle-nosed dolphins.²⁷²

7.1.2 History of development of the issue

There are a number of ecological issues that face the Bahamas. Significant among them are environmental issues such as the impact of tourism on the environment, coral reef decay, waste disposal, and water pollution.²⁷³ Added to this are the impact of hurricanes on some species populations like lizards and on

²⁷² Bahamas-Travel.info, Bahamas Environment [accessed 25 February, 2018]

²⁷³ NationsEncyclopedia.com, The Bahamas Environment [accessed 25 February, 2018]

coastal properties due to storm surges.^{274'275} “Coral reefs face a diverse array of threats, from eutrophication and overfishing to climate change. As live corals are lost and their skeletons eroded, the structural complexity of reefs declines. This may have important consequences for the survival and growth of reef fish because complex habitats mediate predator-prey interactions and influence competition through the provision of prey refugia. A positive correlation exists between structural complexity and reef fish abundance and diversity in both temperate and tropical ecosystems.”²⁷⁶ The government’s environmental concerns are focused on industrial monitoring, providing potable water, and the removal of abandoned vehicles along with general beautification and upkeep of parks and beaches.²⁷⁷

7.1.3 Analysis of significance

It is necessary to understand the importance of tourism to the Bahamas so that an appreciation for the challenges faced from an ecological perspective can be clearly represented. Approximately 50% of all persons working in the Bahamas are directly employed by the tourism sector and another 20% are indirectly

²⁷⁴ Thomas W. Schoener, David A. Spiller, Jonathan B. Losos, Variable ecological effects of hurricanes: The importance of seasonal timing for survival of lizards on Bahamian islands, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Jan 2004, 101 (1) 177-181; DOI:10.1073/pnas.0306887101

²⁷⁵ Kathleen Sullivan Sealey, Eric Stroebel, A hurricane loss risk assessment of coastal properties in the caribbean: Evidence from the Bahamas, *Ocean and Coastal Management*, 2017 Vo. 149 p. 42-51

²⁷⁶ Alice Rogers, Vulnerability of Coral Reef Fisheries to a Loss of Structural Complexity, *Current Biology*, 2014, vol. 24 iss. 09p. 1000-1005

²⁷⁷ NationsEncyclopedia.com, The Bahamas Environment [accessed 25 February, 2018]

employed giving a total of 70% of the labor force is in the tourism industry.²⁷⁸ Accordingly, the need for economic sustainability along with environmental preservation becomes a balancing act. The consideration of these noted environmental issues are akin to survival of the economy and natural resources of the Bahamas. A plan of conservation, and implementation of ecologically low impact development would be beneficial to all concerned and the future generations of residents and visitors. Michael Northcott suggests that the causes for the environmental crisis are complex and multifaceted. He alludes to various accusations of environmentalists ranging from overpopulation to the economics of growth, changing relationships between humanity and nature, and even, according to Lynn White, to blaming the Bible itself, for its mandate to dominate and subdue the earth.²⁷⁹ Much of the concerns arising from this particular issue are somewhat removed from individual presence of mind because many of the negative effects of a neglected respect for the environment does not have an immediate impact on any one individual. What often happens is after a prolonged absence of appropriate measures the impact tends to be corporate. For example, it is an established fact that overfishing in any particular area will eventually deplete the resources that are being sought after and then no one can benefit.²⁸⁰ Both the fishing industry will suffer along with the individual consumer not having availability and then the tourism product is affected by commercial entities like hotels and restaurants not having availability of that

²⁷⁸ TourismToday.com, About the tourism Industry [accessed 27 February, 2018]

²⁷⁹ Michael Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996

²⁸⁰ John A. Matthews, *Encyclopedia of Environmental Change: Overfishing*, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications 2014 [accessed 27 February, 2018]

particular fish. However, this effect takes a while to happen. Vision and forward planning are key elements to effectively mitigate the potentially harmful practices and change them into sustainable programs.

7.1.4 Implications for Pentecostals

On first glance there may not appear to be much in common with Pentecostals when it comes to issues of the environment perhaps due to a lot of silence on the subject. Michael Northcott writes, “religious responses to the catastrophic oil well blowout in the Gulf of Mexico, and responses to long-standing oil pollution in the Niger Delta region, do not indicate a clear correlation between conservative Christianity and biological conservation. At the root of the ecological crisis - and of the oil industry’s continuing ecological destructiveness — is the late medieval cosmology of the earth as a secular mechanism.”²⁸¹ It is agreed that conservative Christianity including Pentecostalism has been somewhat missing in action in this emerging issue that requires a utilitarian type of ethic that will benefit the most people because the environmental effects of a neglected concern for the ecological well-being of our surroundings, countries, regions, territories, and continents are similarly universally impacting. Notwithstanding the Pentecostal connectivity to the Bible as a major resource of ethics for the Pentecostal, if there is no “doing” of theology as nuanced by Pentecostal ethics then it places the issue of ecology as a procrastination event until it develops to the point of unavoidable consideration. What becomes important for the Pentecostal is the emphasis of a pneumatological perspective,

²⁸¹ Michael Northcott, BP, the Blowout and the Bible Belt: Why Conservative Christianity Does Not Conserve Creation, *The Expository Times*, Vol 122, Issue 3, 2010

as suggested by Andrew Gabriel, on the earth and creation that develops a genuine concern for the environment, as does the Spirit who created it. Andrew Gabriel writes, “Since the Protestant Reformation, the Church has focused on the Spirit’s role in the Church and salvation. Today there is a fresh recognition of the wider work of the Spirit in the cosmos.”²⁸² It is this recognition of the work of the Spirit in the cosmos that will provide the Launchpad for Pentecostals to engage this issue in a more deliberate fashion.

7.1.5 Expectations in light of findings in previous chapters

When controversial issues arise that have very little or no direct mention in the Bible, How do Pentecostals arrive at an ethically defensible position? There is general reluctance to create a path for preferred outcomes when we have instantaneous access to the ultimate life guide. Indeed, this theological leaning has formed a part of the foundational experience of what it means to be Pentecostal; there is a strongly held reliance on the interaction of the Holy Spirit in daily living. This distinctive arises from the Pentecostal hermeneutical approach to the Bible’s presentation of the role of the Holy Spirit.

However, to not attempt defining the method ethical issues are processed through the lens of Pentecostalism can be more of a disservice to the identity of the Pentecostal. Without a prototype model to at a minimum begin the process for engaging ethical issues is in my view stagnating the development of the Pentecostal tradition. It is a tradition that has a long history of viewing academic

²⁸² Andrew K. Gabriel, Pneumatological Perspectives For A Theology Of Nature: The Holy Spirit In Relation To Ecology And Technology, Journal of Pentecostal Theology, 2007 Vol. 15 Iss. 2 p. 195-212

genres through somewhat jaundiced spectacles, yet possessing a significant reservoir of untapped experiential theology that is not yet fully explored with potential benefits for the global Ecclesia. With this in mind I propose to determine how the issue of gambling in the Bahamas has been processed by Pentecostals, despite the absence of direct mention in scripture, and use the framework I will identify from this aspect of the research to see if it could be applied to their view of same-sex marriage (an issue which is very much 'live' in the country today). From this approach, I will employ the rubric proposed that provides a paradigm of how the use of the Bible and The Holy Spirit's influence may remain a central Pentecostal distinctive when considering questions of ethics. I will then apply this model to an area of ethical reflection that has not yet been comprehensively explored in the Bahamas: the area of environmental ethics, and in particular, the question, how might Pentecostals respond to the question of eco-theology?

The ethical model developed as a result of the study on the questions of gambling and same-sex marriage is now engaged as a predictor of expected response to the question of ecotheology. Considering the filters of ethical sources gathered with the final layer being the Bible as the primary determinant of ethical congruency and considering the presence of the orbiting pod of 'ethics of music' containing limited songs in both the religious and secular realms relating to the environmentally conscious approach to issues, I would venture to suggest that the responses will be acceptable to the idea of ecotheology, but that the intensity would perhaps be less than desired because of the limited exposure from the orbiting 'ethics of music' aspect of the Pentecostal Ethical Model [PEM] and the

Pastoral layer of ethical sourcing I feel may be limited in speaking to the issue. It should be noted that although the Bible is the primary source of ethics, the Pastoral position occupying the next layer in terms of source dependence has a unique position in terms of awareness as being more prevalent. I attribute this to the nuances of Bible reading noted in the previous study and the somewhat lazy approach to studying the same, particularly among the younger age groups. See Table 28. I will term this 'Pulpit Preferred' syndrome that prefers to get the Bible concepts and principles from the pulpit. So considering this tendency I would expect to find a reduced or mild response to the question of ecotheology due in part to the limited and subdued response from the leadership hierarchy in terms of speaking to this issue in any urgent manner. An unwillingness to even relate would not be out of the realm of expectation.

7.1.6 Responses From Church Leaders

The Assemblies of God official statement on the Environment is as follows:

"The Assemblies of God believes everyone needs to be good a steward of *all* God's creation—including the earth. As clearly indicated in Scripture, we believe the earth was created by God (Genesis 1:1-31; Isaiah 37:16). We also believe it serves as the temporary home for all members of the human race (God's highest life form, made in His own image; Genesis 1:27) until eternity.

Scripture indicates the earth will one day be consumed by fire and cease to exist (Zephaniah 1:18; Isaiah 51:6). We believe before this occurs Christ will return to earth for His church (those who have accepted and believe in Him). At that time Christians will enjoy a new earth presently unknown to mankind (Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13).

In spite of these future events, we feel Christians must act responsibly in their use of God's earth as we rightly harvest its resources. As stated in Genesis 1:27-30, we believe God has given mankind alone complete dominion (authority) over the earth's resources. These resources include the land, the water, the vegetation, and the earth's minerals; as well as the animals, fish, and fowl. Like the earth, we acknowledge these to be gifts from God to mankind; and as gifts they are to be appreciated and cherished. As Christians we believe dominion requires good stewardship of our temporary home—earth.

Today in our American culture, many people have turned their adoration from the Creator to the creation. They have gone to the extreme and are now worshiping the earth. We believe *worship* of the land, the sea, the oceans, and other attributes of the earth is an abomination to God—the Creator.

In the apostle Paul's day the worship of created things (idolatry) was a prevailing problem. Paul addressed this subject in his letter to the church in Rome. Some had begun to worship images of man, birds, animals, and reptiles. In Romans 1:21-23 (NIV), Paul wrote, "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles" [read Romans 1:18-24]. In similar fashion many today have taken issues of the environment to the extreme. Much of this concern is actually driven from the agenda of the New Age Movement, which propagates a belief that the earth possesses deity (is God). Sadly, this pagan religion has been effective in steering society's focus from God and the message of His Word, to the preservation and often worship of His created handiwork—the earth.

A major concern for Christians is the overemphasis of the environment at the expense of spiritual issues effecting life and eternity. The Bible's message declares

that spiritual matters (those affecting the hearts of mankind) are the priority issues with God. These and not the environment are the reason He sent His own Son Jesus as a sacrifice to save people. For God did not send His Son to save the earth in a physical sense but to save the people who inhabit it. We believe this must be the main focus and concern for all Christians today.

As Assemblies of God people we respect and are thankful for the earth, but our greatest thanks and worship is directed upward to God–Creator and giver of life.”²⁸³

Within this statement from the Assemblies of God is an interesting notation on having too much concern for the environment to the extent that the earth is deified and attracting worship. This extreme could possibly be the reason why there is a reluctance for some Pentecostals to fully engage the subject for fear of committing spiritual adultery.

As far as The Church of God of Prophecy, no official statement on the environment was noted.

The World Mission society of the Church of God, published this statement, Church of God Worldwide Environmental Cleanup Movement for the Passover 2017

“The Church of God is the only church in the world, which keeps the Passover. Before and after the holy feast of God, the church carries out the worldwide environmental cleanup every year to clean up the church and the surrounding areas and to proclaim the love of the Passover to all people, according to God’s command to “love your neighbor as yourself,”²⁸⁴ With the Church of God,

²⁸³ Assemblies of God, Environmental Protection, ag.org [accessed 27 February, 2018]

²⁸⁴ watvmedia.org, Church of God Worldwide Environmental Cleanup Movement for the Passover 2017, [accessed 27 February, 2018]

although there is no official statement from the leadership there is a global program directly associated with the environment endorsed by the leadership. It demonstrates a level of commitment to preserving the environment on a global scale.

7.1.7 Do these match my expectations in section 6.5?

Yes this does, because I expected a less intense response and this is what the responses seem to be. Only the Assemblies of God actually saw sufficient merit in producing an official statement. The Church of God opted to show through their global initiative the tangible efforts they were making, and The Church of God of Prophecy is silent on the issue.

7.1.8 Significance of learning

While ecology and the issues of the environment are emerging as important topics for the Christian agenda, and have the ability to pass through the PEM [Pentecostal Ethical Model] the impetus to engage these potentially controversial issues requires a “doing” on the part of the leadership at the highest levels of the organization with a concomitant response from the local leaders to solidify a committed effort to participate as a church in ameliorating the crisis that is right in front of everyone’s eyes each day and probably getting worse. If this ‘doing’ were to be executed and implemented, then the laity would be more comfortable moving out into a realm of challenging the ideas and practices in society that affect the society. All too often, the issues that affect the religious sensibilities attract quicker attention and responses than issues that are national or global. Somehow I get the feeling that the eschatologically prone worldview has skewed the hermeneutic sensitivity of Scripture to be good stewards of all the earth, not

just the section you are familiar with in your neighborhood. The idea as noted in Genesis 1:30 God gives man the authority to look after the whole earth. As such, There needs to be a conscious shift in thinking of responsibility and stewardship as a part of the commitment to God as a Pentecostal seeking to fulfill God's purposes and plans through lifestyle practices. The 'doing' I am suggesting goes a bit further than the 'abiding and 'waiting' Daniel Castelo purports.²⁸⁵ There needs to be a 'doing' that seeks not only to satisfy one's moral theology in the Pentecostal experience, but rather pushes outward in new dimensions that causes the care for your neighbor to be as important as your own ethical construct as in the mandate of scripture to love your neighbor as yourself. This 'doing' asks for the opportunity to speak up for a brother or sister whom you may never see or those yet unborn.

7.2 Quantitative Study

7.2.1 Introduction to questions

The questions selected for the questionnaire used in this survey were designed to gather the opinion of the respondents about the environment. However, it can also be expected that what comes down to the laity as far as what is reiterated or practiced, has the propensity to be watered somewhat due to the competing environmental elements within an individual's context, so seeking quantitative data initially followed by qualitative data is viewed as most appropriate. The hope is that the resulting data would be more representative of the actual

²⁸⁵ Daniel Castelo, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics The Epicletic Community*, Cleveland, CPT Press, 2012

processes involved in arriving at a particular position on any given issue without the additional influences of individual context at the level of the laity.

Having said this, it would be important to evaluate the same responses from the congregations of these three denominations to compare what the denominations, age groups, and genders interaction with the Bible would be in terms of its connection to the environment and whether or not there was a healthy buy-in of the scriptural precedent.

7.2.2 Analysis of data from questions

The first question asks, “I believe the environment is affected by the actions I take.” There was generally strong agreement, approximately two thirds, 65.05% with this statement across the genders, across the age groups, and the denominations. In the agree check box approximately one third, 28.24% responded here, similarly across genders age groups and denominations. See Table 41.

The next question asks, “I believe the environment is important for human survival.” Overall there was 71.99% strongly agree response rate and 25.93% responded with agree. This pattern was generally the same within the category of gender, age groups, and denominations. See Table 42.

The next question asks, “I believe man-made development can negatively impact the environment.” The majority of the responses were overall 53.66% strongly agree with the statement showing less intensity. 31.91% responded with agree with this statement. The other categories were similar in response. See Table 43.

The next question asks, “I believe man-made development can be done in a way that is not harmful to the environment.” Overall 43.54% strongly agree and

40.91% agree. This close pattern between strongly agree and agree was exhibited among all of the categories. See Table 44.

The next question says, "I believe how we treat the environment depends on our upbringing." The response was 48.69% strongly agree and 42.99% agree with this statement. The pattern was the same for the other categories as well. See Table 45.

The next question says "Littering is a moral issue." 44.02% strongly agree with this statement and 42.11% agree. So not much difference, and the other categories gave a similar response and pattern. See Table 46.

The next question reviewed, "I believe the government is responsible to keep the environment healthy." Overall 22.36% strongly agree; 37.19% agree; 22.36% disagree; and 12.06% disagree strongly so there appears to be some differences of opinion but lightly more on the agree side. See Table 47.

The next question says, "I believe the church should not engage the debate about protecting certain lands from developers." The majority of the responses overall were more towards disagreeing with this statement. 34.06% disagree and 24.57% disagree strongly. There was also a healthy number of not certain responses noted, 21.65%. See Table 48

The next question says, "I believe development and job creation is a priority over preserving natural habitats." The top three response rates overall were 28.21% disagree followed by 20.4% agree and then 19.65% not certain. This was a thought-provoking question. See Table 49.

The next question says, "I believe developers should be allowed to dredge harbors to accommodate touristic vessels." This question goes to the respondent's appreciation of the impact of dredging on the surrounding

ecosystems. The top three responses were fairly close; 23.44% disagree followed by 19.45% not certain and 17.71% agree. See Table 50.

The next question says, "I think the creation of crawfish fishing season is a means to keep the prices high." This question tests the individual's knowledge of overfishing and reasons behind creating seasons for fishing certain products. The combined disagree and strongly disagree is 62.99% and the combined agree is 20.83%. See table 51.

The next question says, "I believe being a Christian includes concern for the environment." The combined agree and strongly agree response is 87.35% see Table 52. This indicates that the environment is considered a part of lifestyle of a Pentecostal.

The next question under review is, "When staying at a hotel I prefer to have sheets and towels changed daily." Notably, there is a greater measure of agreement compared to disagreement in the responses. 47.48% strongly agree; 25.18% agree compared with 17.75% disagree and 3.84% strongly disagree. See Table 53. On Table 54, you can find the responses to the following statement, "When shopping I use re-usable bags instead of disposable paper or plastic bags." The top three responses in the overall category are 40.8% disagree, 23.88% agree followed by 13.43% not certain.

7.2.3 Conclusions on the questions of ecology

The survey reveals that when it comes to the environment there is a fairly strong intensity of agreement that environment is affected by human interaction and that each individual has the ability to positively or negatively impact their surroundings. This notion is further supported from the responses to the

statement concerning whether or not the respondent believed that humanity's survival was connected to the ecological parameters that are in operation in the world and the response was again fairly strong in favor of this idea. It appears that the Pentecostals in the Bahamas have the understanding that man-made development is one of the major factors affecting the ecological systems of the earth, believe that it is entirely possible to live in a mutually beneficial manner with the development of products and the construction of needed infrastructure like roads, bridges and buildings but that perhaps there should be studies to evaluate the best way of doing this so as to have minimal impact on the environment. In terms of individual upbringing, it is felt according to the survey responses that respect for the environment is something that is taught best as apart of an individual's lifestyle and rearing and that a single issue like littering is so easily preventable that it becomes an issue that is morally connected to one's conscience as something that is wrong to do. In other words there is no apparent good in littering. In examining the government's responsibility to keep the environment clean and healthy there was no strong standout as far as the general sentiment lied among Pentecostals although there was a slightly better agree response overall. Perhaps the respondents were thinking this meant an abdication of individual responsibility to some degree and as a result were reluctant to agree with the government having this responsibility. As far as the church in getting involved with the debate on protecting lands from developers there was perhaps some uneasiness as reflected in the less intense responses but nonetheless there was overall support in the direction of the church speaking up about the issue in favor of land preservation. Along with this debate is perhaps thoughts in the back of the respondents mind concerning the economic impact of

the proposed development and that in a scenario of high unemployment this factor becomes a controversial move. The follow-up question to this seems to support this dilemma because there was a very middle of the road type of response rate when asked if they felt that jobs and development should take priority over preservation of natural habitats. There was a slightly higher disagreement compared with agreement in this instance but a notable amount of uncertainty was indicative of the challenge. The question about allowing dredging for purposes of expanding tourism needs corroborates the sentiment, as the numbers are fairly similar. In moving to the issue of overfishing, the question relative to crawfish season in the Bahamas is something that the public is well aware of and have generally seen the favorable results of creating the seasonal fishing laws in the country so this agreement on the issue is reflected in the responses agreeing to this. There is a noted strong impression that care and respect for the environment is a part of being a Christian. This is possibly an indication of heightened awareness of biblical accounts and references to being good stewards of the earth and all God has given to mankind including the environment. The final questions attempt to discover if the concern about the environment is of sufficient concern that it would alter lifestyle and behavior in areas that can improve or limit the impact of negativity on the environment like using the green option to re-use sheets and towels when staying at a hotel or preferring re-usable bags when shopping instead disposable paper or plastic. The responses showed that there was a preference for having sheets and towels changed daily but that reusing bags for shopping purposes was more favorable.

7.2.4 Conclusions vs. my expectations

In the majority of the conclusions summarizing the responses the results were generally expected based on my initial observations of how the Pentecostal level of engagement on the issue is apparently low. What is a bit surprising was the apparent desire of the research pool to be environmentally correct in principle but that its importance does not reach the practical level of behavioral changes that can immediately have an impact in favor of the environment. I would have expected more significant changes in environmental lifestyle as in a conversion experience that the Pentecostals are very familiar with. Notwithstanding this, it should be considered that this is a research exercise that was measured at a single point in time and that perhaps there is progress to be expected down the road. This would be a good follow-up project to determine if indeed progress in this area is occurring.

7.3 Qualitative Study

7.3.1 Focus Group Summary

This method involving the use of focus groups will be employed to test conclusions derived from surveys, and text-based discourse. This should provide a reservoir of information from which a pattern can possibly be distilled that is sufficiently repeatable to test the hypothetical model of the ethical factors contributing to a Pentecostal's decision event developed up to this point. The question of the environment's place in personal and collective responsibility; a complex ethical issue on the religious horizon, will be explored. The same format as that used with the investigation of the two other ethical challenges, gambling and same-sex marriage will be used in this setting.

The focus group discussions gave these responses to the question: "Do you believe the Bible outlines your duty to care for the environment?" There was a general approving nod by the participants in the focus group but there did not appear to be an urgent tone in discussion of the issue. [F3] Says, "...There needs to be more education particularly in the church arena as well as the schools." [F2] Says, "...We don't naturally connect this question as a part of the faith. Yet the scripture does support this."

The question was asked to the group to give their opinion about overfishing and the imposed fishing seasons. [M3] When we think about depleting fishing resources and allowing nature to replenish itself I think the vast majority of persons view this environmental aspect from a financial or economic perspective...this drives our ethics in this regard!"

The group was asked whether they thought littering was an issue of morality.[M2] Says, "...everyone knows Littering is wrong. The Bible says to him that knows to do and does not; to him it is a sin. So littering can become a moral issue."

[F3] Says, "...the church should cater to the whole man; yes we often focus heavily on the spiritual side of things but there needs to be more education."

The group was asked suggestions on the way forward with this issue.

[F2] "...The church should do an awareness program."

[M3] "...The mindset of our youth and the next generation would be required to change the lack of preservation and protection of the environment."

The following responses were given to the question: "Do you feel the environment has a role in your Christian walk?"

[f3] "From the beginning of time we were put here on earth to take care of our environment, God commanded it, so whatever we can do to keep it we ought to do it." [f2] "...Humans don't appreciate God's creation and especially Bahamians, we prefer to sit in the air-conditioned home instead of being outside like the tourists and enjoy and appreciate the beaches." [f1] "The environment is us...so we ought to be concerned."

Do you think Pentecostals have had a voice in the area of the environment? [F1] "...The Adventists seem to have more concern than the Pentecostals." [M1] "I think Pentecostals could do more and our leaders should steer the members more in this area." [f1] "I think we need to have more teaching on the environment and health and wellness and how they relate."

The group was asked, "Is there a connection between the environment and your Christianity? [f3] you have choices to make and the results of those choices should be examined so yes I think we should be more concerned about the environment and how our choices impact it."

7.3.2 Conclusions from the focus group discussions on ecology

The pulse of the issue of the environment in respect to the Pentecostal's lifestyle could be readily detected from the expressions of the participants in the focus group discussions. There was generally an apprehensive demeanor and a feeling of the collective being out of touch. It seems as if they were drawing from personal exposure to the issue as a casual observer but there was no real sense of engagement with the issue. There was a lack of urgency about the discussion as far as seeing concerns about the ecology of the country and world being in a state of crisis. They admitted to the fact that there was a need for more education

in this area and that this particular admission is a good explanation of the general apathy towards the subject. What was particularly eye-opening was the expression made by one of the Participants that the subject of the environment is not something that they immediately connect with their faith as a Pentecostal even though they are aware that the scriptures support being a good caretaker of the same. Another participant responded by saying that Bahamians don't appreciate God's creation and alluded to the apparent attitude of not going outside to enjoy the beaches and natural beauty the islands have to offer. Coming across very strongly was the cry for educational efforts to bring the laity up to date on this issue of the environment and its connection to their faith. This was a repeated request. There was a general desire to improve their current level of appreciation and engagement on this issue. During the discussions, it was suggested that Pentecostals need to find their voice and participate in the debate. The idea of Pentecostals and their leaders are too focused on spiritual things that they ignore other aspects of the Christian walk that require attention and action is indicative of some truth to the accusation of Pentecostals being too 'otherworldly' that they neglect the world right in front of them.

7.3.3 Conclusions vs. expectations

The conclusions gathered from these focus group discussions were as expected in terms of the general apprehensive mood and reluctance in discussing the subject. However what was refreshing was the desire to move away from this position and become more knowledgeable and engaged in the subject. There was a frank discussion of the gap in Pentecostalism in the Bahamas with regard to this subject but they gave the impression that it was not too late to do

something about it and they were desirous of the same. The call for more education on the subject from an organizational standpoint was cause for interest an unexpected. I thought they would have basically ignored the subject or attempt to change the subject to something they considered more 'juicy' but I thought this was demonstrative of a maturing church in that they were prepared to discuss in ethically informed ways how to move forward and have a positive effect as an individual and a church.

7.3.4 Comparisons with quantitative study

The Quantitative study revealed a difference between the ideal and the practical in terms of what the Pentecostal says and does on a day-to-day basis. The survey showed strong indications towards the ideal with regard to recognizing the impact of human activity on our ecosystems from man-made developments to individual ability to do things that would help the environmental decline. Yet when it came to actually engaging in the practices that would help there was a reluctance noted. The focus group discussions were able to shed some light on this scenario as they revealed that although there was a recognition of the importance of the environment in the survival of humanity, there was a concomitant dearth of knowledge on the subject to sufficiently elevate their conscience to actively engage the issue in a meaningful way. Accordingly there were calls for programs and initiatives and direct conversation from the leadership about this issue. The focus group was also instrumental in describing the gray areas of uncertainty and attribute them to the inadequate knowledge base of the participants and church on this subject as a whole.

7.3.5 Comparisons with literature

Tony Ritchie writes, “...Relating Christian doctrines of the Trinity, Christology, pneumatology, and soteriology to the doctrine of creation... has implications for a Pentecostal ecotheology.”²⁸⁶ The basis of Ritchie’s idea is that the doctrine of creation, which Pentecostals are firmly connected to, is a strong foundation from which to develop an ecotheology in an effort to address concerns and issues relating to the environment. This connection seems appropriate and natural for Pentecostals to use this avenue of reflection as a starting point for this journey. Aaron Jason Swoboda asks, “...is the earth’s ecological crisis, at least in part, a result of a Christian theology in crisis which has failed to offer an adequate ethical paradigm for human responsibility in caring for creation?”²⁸⁷ This question casts a heavy responsibility upon Christian theologians to awake from a slumber of nonchalance and perhaps acknowledge at least in part the failure to properly engage this issue of significant import affecting not only Christians but humanity as a whole, to whom they are recruited to provide pastoral care by way of divine mandate. To the Pentecostal, this question unearths a lot of what this thesis has discovered through the process of investigating through quantitative and qualitative means: There is agreement within the context of this study that the lack of proper ethical constructs based on theological principles that are faithful to the Pentecostal metanarrative are urgently needed to address the issues of the environment in a substantial way. The Pentecostal who sees Pentecostalism as the fastest growing movement in Christianity and has been

²⁸⁶ Tony Ritchie, *Radical and Responsible: A Wesleyan-Pentecostal Ecotheology*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 23 (2014) 216-235

²⁸⁷ Aaron Jason Swoboda, *Tongues and Trees: Towards a Green Pentecostal Pneumatology* PhD Thesis University of Birmingham 2011

accordingly petitioning the ecumenical community for a seat at the collective place of Christian reflection as a result, ought not leave out a conversation about their particular perspective on ecotheology. Pentecostals have a unique opportunity to pioneer the reflection through the inherently unique theological ethic that identify the movement as distinctively Pentecostal. The model proposed in this study PEM [Pentecostal Ethical Model] is hoped to be an initial step in that direction as it includes a core of ethical sources that are inalienably, though not exclusively, Pentecostal: The Bible, The Spirit and Ethic of Music. Andrew Ray Williams writes, "Science has important things to say to theology, and theology to science. In order for a fruitful dialogue to take place, Pentecostals must mine their distinctives, such as pneumatology, in an effort to secure a place at the table."²⁸⁸ The results of qualitative and quantitative study have agreed that indeed a dialogue between science and theology would be symbiotic in moving the discussion forward to productive ends. There is a knowledge gap at the grassroots level of Pentecostalism as noted in the findings of this thesis. I suspect that this gap exists in part because of the void at the hierarchy of the church leadership levels and that void is perhaps indicative of the miniscule reflection on the subject as a whole. In other words, there is not enough meat to share at the dinner table so what we have are a bunch of snacks. Notwithstanding this, Pentecostals and others have not left the dining hall but are patiently waiting for something to sink their teeth into. Considering this expression from Williams, I agree that a second look at Pneumatology is perhaps

²⁸⁸ Andrew Ray Williams, *Flame of Creation: Pentecostal Ecotheology in Dialogue with Clark Pinnock's Pneumatology*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 2017 Vol. 26 Iss. 2 p. 272-285

an ideal platform to launch a conversation towards developing an approach to ecotheology that would be utilitarian in benefiting the most people.

7.4 Conclusions on the Ecological crisis as a challenge for Bahamian

Pentecostals

Key learning comes from the discovery of a general dearth of reflection on ecotheology that is seen as an unintentional ignorance of the environmental crisis within Pentecostalism. The particular context of the Bahamas with so many aspects of this archipelago that are vulnerable to the negative effects of global warming and the man-made fueling of the same. It behooves a deliberate consideration from the indigenous purveyors of theology and in this context the students of Pentecostalism to initiate a reflection that leads to definitive action in terms of individual lifestyle as well as national policy. Loreen Maseno²⁸⁹ discusses the African Pentecostal perspective by indicating that Pentecostals may not be as far off from an ecotheology of their own as she examined three Pentecostal churches in Kenya and their unwitting connection to ecotheology. It seems that perhaps a reorientation that involves the appropriate vocabulary needed to articulate the Pentecostal ecotheological agenda is what is needed to create a support frame for the development of a more structured ecotheology.

²⁸⁹ Loreen Maseno, *Prayer for Rain: A Pentecostal Perspective from Kenya*, *The Ecumenical Review*, 2017, Vol. 69 Iss. 3 p. 336-347

8. Final Conclusions

8.1 What I have learned

This thesis tackles a very real practical challenge that Pentecostals face almost daily: the issue of biblically-informed ethical decision making. When controversial issues arise that have very little or no direct mention in the Bible, how do Pentecostals arrive at an ethically defensible position? The free-form embrace of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal tradition has perhaps contributed to a lack of a tangible approach which might be descriptive and prescriptive of the way ethical issues ought to be processed, the most common Pentecostal idea simply being that the Holy Spirit will provide the necessary guidance in whatever situation life presents, whenever life presents it. John Enyinnaya suggests Pentecostal hermeneutics has a tendency to follow the reader-centered approach because of a heavy emphasis on experience to the point of elevating visions and dreams above the Bible. Instead of Scripture taking the lead in all doctrinal issues, experience is the first 'go to' place, and the scripture is relegated to simply a tool to validate experience.²⁹⁰ I do not fully agree with Enyinnaya that the Bible is only a tool to validate experiences of the practicing Pentecostal because it would suggest a somewhat shallow use of the Bible and place it in a less intimate place within the practice of Pentecostal Christianity. Rather, I am more inclined to view the relation as a stage of the process in engaging the scriptural text; but it is important for us to acknowledge the essential validity of Enyinnaya's point.

²⁹⁰ John Enyinnaya. "Pentecostal Hermeneutics and Preaching: An Appraisal" *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* [Vol. XIII (1) 2008], 148-149

Enyinnaya is writing from an African experience of Pentecostalism that may not be unlike the Caribbean experience. When considering the historical influence of Africa on culture in this hemisphere, it would not be too far of a stretch to accept a lingering legacy of religious practice that is similar. In particular, when we consider the extensive slave trade that impacted Latin America and the Caribbean through the influx of African-born slaves, included in this influence are the religious stories, methods and application of ethics according to the experiences encountered. To illustrate the extent of this influence we could look at the estimates from *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* on the numbers of African slaves transported between 1501-1525, which was 13,363 and compare to the peak period of 1776-1800 the numbers were 2,008,670.²⁹¹ These numbers point to an unavoidable cultural and religious impact of Africa on the islands in the Caribbean despite the push toward a Eurocentric Christianity through the practice of the “Encomienda” an old Spanish institution that parceled out human labour.²⁹²

My personal experience as a Pentecostal in the Bahamas certainly reflects Enyinanna’s insights. Because of the pneumatological element to their thinking, Pentecostals in the Caribbean and beyond often feel no need to create a template for arriving at ethical decisions that are consistent with firmly held theological views. Rather, their concept leans on a ‘genie-like’ perception that a simple summons of the Spirit is all that is required, in lieu of referring to human

²⁹¹ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> [accessed August 15, 2013]

²⁹² Ondina E. González and Justo L. González. *Christianity in Latin America: A History* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 29

generated guidelines. Accordingly, there is general reluctance to create a path for preferred outcomes when we have instantaneous access to the ultimate life guide. Indeed, this theological leaning has formed a part of the foundational experience of what it means to be Pentecostal; there is a strongly held reliance on the interaction of the Holy Spirit in daily living. This leaning stems in part, from its origins of experiential discovery of “tongues” as a supernatural impartation of the Spirit and the designation of official Bible evidence of the same.²⁹³ The idea that a Christian can get even closer to God by experiencing this supernatural encounter of ‘speaking in tongues’ can and perhaps has created a tangential sector of the Pentecostal diaspora that is simply not interested in studying, reflecting or pursuing from an academic perspective the impact of this spiritual encounter as it relates to the practice of ethics on a daily basis: the interest in this case is focused on ‘the experience’ and how to get others to experience this type of spiritual encounter as a fulfillment of perceived mission duty. That is not to infer that all Pentecostals who speak in tongues are not interested in theological reflection of the Holy Spirit or academic pursuits relative to Pentecostalism, or that ‘speaking in tongues’ is the sum total expression of the Holy Spirit. Rather it is the ethic of involvement of the Holy Spirit on both an individual and collective level through whatever expression that may take, that creates community through shared experiences such as peace of mind, healing or worship experiences that incorporate musical lyrics that resonate with the ethics of that community. On the other hand there are perhaps

²⁹³ Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson 2001], 3

segments of Pentecostalism that do not ‘speak in tongues’ and embody similar community connections that are similarly reinforced.

What should also be considered is that this experience of a spiritual connection engaged, forms a type of community that is special in the eyes of the Pentecostal. In examining the Pentecostal lifestyle in chapter 1, spiritual connectivity and community creating traits are key drawing points for the Pentecostal way of being. Accordingly, any model constructed to house the Pentecostal’s ethical approach should include these features. On the flip side, Pentecostalism is often analyzed and defined by some using only tools of academia and disregarding the importance of the experiential component that could give a better definition and understanding of what it means to be Pentecostal.

Notwithstanding this, to overlook defining the way we process ethical issues and organize the interpretation of biblical principles through the lens of Pentecostalism that incorporates both experiential and academic methods, can be more of a disservice than a faithful adherence to a religious culture. The delay in producing a working model for engaging ethical issues is in my view stagnating the progress of the Pentecostal tradition both in the Caribbean and beyond. Pentecostalism is a tradition that has a long history of viewing academic genres through somewhat jaundiced spectacles, yet possessing a significant reservoir of untapped experiential theology that could benefit the global Ecclesia. The model developed using the study of the gambling issue and the same-sex controversy serve as starting points to frame this Pentecostal ethic. It is supported by an analysis of ethical sourcing that demonstrate the biblical

priority. From this point, a paradigm of how the use of the Bible and the Holy Spirit's influence may remain a central Pentecostal distinctive while simultaneously permit the adjudication of a practical liturgy when considering questions of ethics becomes available. In particular to an area of ethical reflection that has not yet been comprehensively explored in the Bahamas: the area of environmental ethics, and more specifically, how might Pentecostals respond to the question of eco-theology?

As this Pentecostal Ethical Model [PEM] unfolded through the investigation of hot topic issues in the Bahamas, key learning from the examination of qualitative and quantitative data on the issue of gambling brought to bear the importance of the sources of ethics drawn upon and hence valued by the Bahamian Pentecostal when forced to confront a particular issue. It appeared that the Bible was primary in that sourcing but that parental and pastoral entities had marked influence on the determined outcome the individual would position him or herself on a particular issue. As the question of same-sex marriage was explored, the idea of a more socially engaging dimension of Pentecostalism surfaced as a response to preserving the tenets of the faith. I learned that the need to speak up more and interact more in terms of voicing the position of the Pentecostal faith was seen as not just optional but a requirement of being a good steward of the scriptures. In addition, the valued preservation and reinforcement of a collective community that is bound together with distinctives that become identifying marks of Pentecostalism that yearn to move forward and transfer the same to its offspring.

From text based research and the historiography of Pentecostalism a pathway of music was observed as having a noted connection to the way Pentecostals in the Bahamas practiced their faith and conducted their missionary efforts. This music that began as a tool to attract new converts, became integrated into the whole as an ethical participant in terms of informing and reinforcing the concepts of faith as outlined in the Bible. I learned that the melodies provided a measure of enjoyment but the lyrics were a display of ethics that governed those who adhered to Pentecostalism simply because it was always there. This reality precipitated incorporating an ethic of music and its accompanying lyrics into the Pentecostal Ethical Model developed from the quantitative and qualitative methods of research used in this thesis.

8.2 Significance of this research

This thesis reflects upon three primary issues: what Pentecostalism looks like in the Bahamas, what the background to these key ethical issues is, and what Pentecostals believe about and do with the Bible. My aim in this thesis is to find an empirical frame from which a repeatable Pentecostal Ethical model could be developed. That being done, the initiation of an approach to ecotheology has been attempted in view of determining the existing ethical barometer on this emerging subject. This attempt provides for a potential building block within the Pentecostal/Charismatic/Renewal diaspora upon which a sustainable theology can be constructed.

In the introduction of this thesis I presented the research question, do Pentecostals in the Bahamas adhere to a particular set of ethics? And can this evolving ethic be described as distinctively Pentecostal? In response to this

question the short answer is yes. What this thesis has set out to do in unearthing a Pentecostal ethical construct has been accomplished. What is important to note is that this research has demonstrated that there is a consistent pattern of the way ethical issues are processed by Bahamian Pentecostals as noted throughout this project and it is presented as a prototype model namely the Pentecostal Ethical Model [PEM]. The consistent pattern of ethics is posited within a community that thrives on shared experiences. It was also discovered that ethics was often approached in a two-tiered manner that involves the stated or ideal ethic along with the ethics that are actually practiced. There was a sense given of a desire for the ethics practiced to achieve the ideal or stated ethics but there are many factors that hinder this goal. These include a lack of education of the concepts contained in the Bible. A lack of transference of the principles and concepts in the Bible from the leadership to the laity, particularly as it relates to issues that are of national concern that require a more public ethical position. Other sources of ethics were employed when information from the primary source of the Bible was not readily available. Of course this availability can involve many factors including a lack of Bible reading and a heavy reliance on pastors to provide hermeneutics on Biblical principles and concepts from the pulpit. Availability also includes the possibility that the Bible does not speak directly to the issue at hand. So where availability of the primary ethical source is low, parents pastors, teachers and musical lyrics all have a role to play in the ethical decisions of the Bahamian Pentecostal.

8.3 Looking forward

This thesis opens several doors for further research and reflection. It would be profitable to repeat this study in as many countries where Pentecostalism resides in order to establish a network of research based knowledge that would establish to a greater extent the Pentecostal ethic that is embedded with theological distinctives that form in part the identity of Pentecostals worldwide. As a starting point I would suggest the Caribbean countries first in that there are similarities of culture and history that would be a natural next step to begin a network of thought and reflection in the Caribbean. Secondly, further application of this initial model I call the Pentecostal Ethical Model [PEM] needs to be tested in other areas of reflection the investigator deems appropriate and to suggest possible modification, And thirdly, This research needs to get in the hearing of Pentecostals themselves beginning with leaders so that the theological and ethical landscape can be expanded and perhaps recruit future Pentecostal theologians to add to the base of Pentecostalism with fresh minds, eyes and ears.

Tables

Table 1. “I believe gambling is a sin”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	45.71% 64	27.14% 38	15.71% 22	7.14% 10	4.29% 6
Female	54.22% 199	22.07% 81	12.53% 46	7.90% 29	3.27% 12
18-30	40.95% 43	32.38% 34	15.24% 16	8.57% 9	2.86% 3
31-40	43.42% 33	27.63% 21	22.37% 17	3.95% 3	2.63% 2
41-50	54.25% 83	22.22% 34	11.11% 17	6.54% 10	5.88% 9
51-60	51.24% 62	21.49% 26	9.92% 12	12.40% 15	4.96% 6
61+	60.44% 55	19.78% 18	10.99% 10	6.59% 6	2.20% 2
Assemblies of God	53.49% 115	26.98% 58	9.30% 20	7.44% 16	2.79% 6
Church of God of Prophecy	50.30% 83	21.82% 36	15.76% 26	7.27% 12	4.85% 8
Church of God	51.30% 59	22.61% 26	13.91% 16	8.70% 10	3.48% 4

Table 2. " I believe gambling is ok as an amusement"	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	5.67% 8	14.18% 20	14.18% 20	34.75% 49	31.21% 44
Female	4.97% 18	12.98% 47	11.60% 42	29.01% 105	41.44% 150
18-30	1.03% 1	15.46% 15	15.46% 15	34.02% 33	34.02% 33
31-40	1.41% 1	9.86% 7	18.31% 13	29.58% 21	40.85% 29
41-50	6.99% 10	14.69% 21	6.99% 10	27.97% 40	43.36% 62
51-60	7.02% 8	14.04% 16	14.91% 17	26.32% 30	37.72% 43
61+	7.32% 6	13.41% 11	9.76% 8	37.80% 31	31.71% 26
Assemblies of God	4.21% 9	11.68% 25	10.75% 23	29.91% 64	43.46% 93
Church of God of Prophecy	6.75% 11	14.11% 23	13.50% 22	32.52% 53	33.13% 54

Table 3. “I believe gambling encourages a poor work ethic”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	55.07% 76	24.64% 34	8.70% 12	6.52% 9	5.07% 7
Female	54.87% 197	25.91% 93	8.64% 31	6.13% 22	4.46% 16
18-30	47.96% 47	31.63% 31	12.24% 12	5.10% 5	3.06% 3
31-40	59.15% 42	22.54% 16	7.04% 5	5.63% 4	5.63% 4
41-50	58.99% 82	18.71% 26	5.76% 8	7.91% 11	8.63% 12
51-60	49.55% 55	28.83% 32	9.91% 11	9.01% 10	2.70% 3
61+	62.20% 51	24.39% 20	7.32% 6	3.66% 3	2.44% 2
Assemblies of God	56.34% 120	27.70% 59	7.04% 15	4.69% 10	4.23% 9
Church of God of Prophecy	52.83% 84	20.75% 33	12.58% 20	8.18% 13	5.66% 9
Church of God	55.05% 60	28.44% 31	6.42% 7	6.42% 7	3.67% 4

Table 4. “I believe gambling is a social problem”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	52.94% 72	30.88% 42	8.82% 12	2.94% 4	4.41% 6
Female	55.68% 196	25.28% 89	8.52% 30	5.68% 20	4.83% 17
18-30	56.12% 55	21.43% 21	16.33% 16	4.08% 4	2.04% 2
31-40	56.34% 40	22.54% 16	11.27% 8	2.82% 2	7.04% 5
41-50	59.56% 81	25.00% 34	4.41% 6	4.41% 6	6.62% 9
51-60	47.71% 52	31.19% 34	8.26% 9	9.17% 10	3.67% 4
61+	55.84% 43	31.17% 24	3.90% 3	3.90% 3	5.19% 4
Assemblies of God	59.90% 124	24.15% 50	7.25% 15	3.86% 8	4.83% 10
Church of God of Prophecy	53.13% 85	25.62% 41	11.25% 18	6.25% 10	3.75% 6
Church of God	50.00% 52	32.69% 34	7.69% 8	5.77% 6	3.85% 4

Table 5 “I believe gambling should not concern the church”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	12.50% 17	5.88% 8	5.88% 8	25.74% 35	50.00% 68
Female	7.47% 26	10.34% 36	7.18% 25	25.00% 87	50.00% 174
18-30	8.16% 8	12.24% 12	14.29% 14	28.57% 28	36.73% 36
31-40	5.80% 4	11.59% 8	7.25% 5	21.74% 15	53.62% 37
41-50	8.76% 12	8.03% 11	4.38% 6	22.63% 31	56.20% 77
51-60	9.43% 10	6.60% 7	3.77% 4	29.25% 31	50.94% 54
61+	11.69% 9	10.39% 8	3.90% 3	29.87% 23	44.16% 34
Assemblies of God	6.28% 13	5.31% 11	4.83% 10	24.15% 50	59.42% 123
Church of God of Prophecy	9.68% 15	7.10% 11	7.10% 11	29.68% 46	46.45% 72
Church of God	14.15% 15	20.75% 22	9.43% 10	22.64% 24	33.02% 35

Table 6. “I would accept donations into my church from gambling enterprises”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	8.03% 11	14.60% 20	16.06% 22	27.74% 38	33.58% 46
Female	6.18% 22	11.24% 40	18.54% 66	23.88% 85	40.17% 143 a
18-30	9.28% 9	13.40% 13	23.71% 23	24.74% 24	28.87% 28
31-40	5.63% 4	15.49% 11	12.68% 9	19.72% 14	46.48% 33
41-50	7.86% 11	12.86% 18	17.86% 25	19.29% 27	42.14% 59
51-60	6.31% 7	11.71% 13	15.32% 17	25.23% 28	41.44% 46
61+	5.13% 4	6.41% 5	17.95% 14	41.03% 32	29.49% 23
Assemblies of God	4.31% 9	8.13% 17	11.96% 25	26.79% 56	48.80% 102
Church of God of Prophecy	9.43% 15	10.06% 16	21.38% 34	28.30% 45	30.82% 49
Church of God	10.91% 12	22.73% 25	24.55% 27	16.36% 18	25.45% 28

Table 7. “I would accept a scholarship form a web-shop”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	11.03% 15	19.12% 26	16.91% 23	24.26% 33	28.68% 39
Female	6.72% 24	14.29% 51	19.89% 71	24.65% 88	34.45% 123
18-30	15.63% 15	20.83% 20	33.33% 32	13.54% 13	16.67% 16
31-40	8.57% 6	18.57% 13	20.00% 14	17.14% 12	35.71% 25
41-50	4.96% 7	13.48% 19	12.77% 18	23.40% 33	45.39% 64
51-60	6.36% 7	18.18% 20	16.36% 18	26.36% 29	32.73% 36
61+	5.13% 4	8.97% 7	12.82% 10	44.87% 35	28.21% 22
Assemblies of God	4.81% 10	12.98% 27	16.83% 35	22.60% 47	42.79% 89
Church of God of Prophecy	6.92% 11	14.47% 23	24.53% 39	28.30% 45	25.79% 41
Church of God	14.68% 16	23.85% 26	20.18% 22	21.10% 23	20.18% 22

Table 8. "I would buy a lottery ticket"	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	9.02% 12	22.56% 30	9.02% 12	27.82% 37	31.58% 42
Female	3.63% 13	13.41% 48	10.61% 38	31.01% 111	41.34% 148
18-30	8.42% 8	17.89% 17	10.53% 10	34.74% 33	28.42% 27
31-40	4.23% 3	12.68% 9	7.04% 5	32.39% 23	43.66% 31
41-50	3.68% 5	14.71% 20	11.76% 16	23.53% 32	46.32% 63
51-60	6.25% 7	17.86% 20	8.93% 10	25.89% 29	41.07% 46
61+	3.75% 3	12.50% 10	12.50% 10	38.75% 31	32.50% 26
Assemblies of God	2.37% 5	14.22% 30	7.11% 15	30.81% 65	45.50% 96
Church of God of Prophecy	4.40% 7	16.35% 26	12.58% 20	30.82% 49	35.85% 57
Church of God	10.68% 11	17.48% 18	12.62% 13	29.13% 30	30.10% 31

Table 9. “I would accept a medical loan from a web-shop”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	11.11% 15	20.00% 27	27.41% 37	20.74% 28	20.74% 28
Female	6.03% 21	14.66% 51	25.57% 89	22.70% 79	31.03% 108
18-30	11.46% 11	21.88% 21	38.54% 37	13.54% 13	14.58% 14
31-40	1.45% 1	21.74% 15	24.64% 17	14.49% 10	37.68% 26
41-50	5.93% 8	12.59% 17	21.48% 29	22.22% 30	37.78% 51
51-60	7.41% 8	19.44% 21	22.22% 24	23.15% 25	27.78% 30
61+	11.54% 9	6.41% 5	24.36% 19	34.62% 27	23.08% 18
Assemblies of God	4.39% 9	4.39% 9	4.39% 9	19.02% 39	37.07% 76
Church of God of Prophecy	7.59% 12	16.46% 26	32.28% 51	22.78% 36	20.89% 33
Church of God	13.59% 14	25.24% 26	17.48% 18	23.30% 24	20.39% 21

Table 10. “I believe the Bible teaches against gambling”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	38.52% 52	34.07% 46	14.81% 20	8.15% 11	4.44% 6
Female	50.14% 178	30.70% 109	13.52% 48	2.82% 10	2.82% 10
18-30	35.42% 34	32.29% 31	25.00% 24	4.17% 4	3.13% 3
31-40	50.00% 35	28.57% 20	18.57% 13	0.00% 0	2.86% 2
41-50	54.35% 75	30.43% 42	7.97% 11	2.90% 4	4.35% 6
51-60	45.37% 49	36.11% 39	9.26% 10	6.48% 7	2.78% 3
61+	49.38% 40	28.40% 23	11.11% 9	7.41% 6	3.70% 3
Assemblies of God	48.80% 102	32.06% 67	12.44% 26	4.31% 9	2.39% 5
Church of God of Prophecy	44.23% 69	34.62% 54	14.10% 22	4.49% 7	2.56% 4
Church of God	48.15% 52	30.56% 33	13.89% 15	2.78% 3	4.63% 5

Table 11. “I believe a gambling parent can negatively impact the family unit”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	64.71% 88	25.74% 35	3.68% 5	4.41% 6	1.47% 2
Female	70.54% 249	20.40% 72	4.82% 17	2.27% 8	1.98% 7
18-30	68.75% 66	22.92% 22	5.21% 5	2.08% 2	1.04% 1
31-40	76.47% 52	14.71% 10	5.88% 4	2.94% 2	0.00% 0
41-50	71.94% 100	20.14% 28	2.88% 4	3.60% 5	1.44% 2
51-60	66.07% 74	21.43% 24	6.25% 7	2.68% 3	3.57% 4
61+	61.04% 47	29.87% 23	2.60% 2	3.90% 3	2.60% 2
Assemblies of God	72.51% 153	22.75% 48	2.84% 6	1.42% 3	0.47% 1
Church of God of Prophecy	67.74% 105	22.58% 35	3.87% 6	2.58% 4	3.23% 5
Church of God	63.21% 67	21.70% 23	8.49% 9	5.66% 6	0.94% 1

Table 12."I used the Bible to determine my moral position on gambling"	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	51.49% 69	26.12% 35	10.45% 14	8.21% 11	3.73% 5
Female	49.70% 165	30.42% 101	10.54% 35	6.93% 23	2.41% 8
18-30	36.96% 34	31.52% 29	18.48% 17	11.96% 11	1.09% 1
31-40	53.73% 36	28.36% 19	11.94% 8	4.48% 3	1.49% 1
41-50	64.39% 85	23.48% 31	5.30% 7	4.55% 6	2.27% 3
51-60	48.08% 50	31.73% 33	9.62% 10	5.77% 6	4.81% 5
61+	42.67% 32	32.00% 24	8.00% 6	12.00% 9	5.33% 4
Assemblies of God	54.77% 109	26.13% 52	9.05% 18	7.54% 15	2.51% 5
Church of God of Prophecy	48.68% 74	34.21% 52	8.55% 13	5.26% 8	3.29% 5
Church of God	45.00% 45	30.00% 30	15.00% 15	8.00% 8	2.00% 2

Table 13. "I Believe same-sex marriage is wrong"	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	90.07% 127	2.84% 4	0.71% 1	0.71% 1	5.67% 8
Female	87.74% 315	3.90% 14	1.11% 4	1.11% 4	6.13% 22
18-30	84.00% 84	8.00% 8	3.00% 3	1.00% 1	4.00% 4
31-40	95.59% 65	0.00% 0	1.47% 1	0.00% 0	2.94% 2
41-50	90.83% 99	3.67% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.50% 6
51-60	90.83% 99	3.67% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.50% 6
61+	86.25% 69	3.75% 3	0.00% 0	3.75% 3	6.25% 5
Assemblies of God	90.05% 190	3.79% 8	0.95% 2	0.00% 0	5.21% 11
Church of God of Prophecy	89.51% 145	3.70% 6	1.23% 2	0.00% 0	5.56% 9
Church of God	83.78% 93	2.70% 3	1.80% 2	2.70% 3	9.01% 10

Table 14. "I Believe same-sex marriage does not affect one's faith in God"	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	10.14% 14	2.17% 3	4.35% 6	13.77% 19	69.57% 96
Female	14.73% 52	3.68% 13	4.25% 15	10.20% 36	67.14% 237
18-30	8.08% 8	7.07% 7	10.10% 10	6.06% 6	68.69% 68
31-40	10.45% 7	1.49% 1	1.49% 1	11.94% 8	74.63% 50
41-50	16.67% 24	2.78% 4	3.47% 5	6.94% 10	70.14% 101
51-60	13.08% 14	0.93% 1	3.74% 4	16.82% 18	65.42% 70
61+	18.67% 14	4.00% 3	1.33% 1	18.67% 14	57.33% 43
Assemblies of God	10.48% 22	2.86% 6	3.33% 7	8.57% 18	74.76% 157
Church of God of Prophecy	17.72% 28	2.53% 4	4.43% 7	10.76% 17	64.56% 102
Church of God	13.89% 15	4.63% 5	5.56% 6	16.67% 18	59.26% 64

Table 15. “I Believe same-sex marriage is strictly a civil concern”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	13.87% 19	7.30% 10	5.84% 8	16.79% 23	56.20% 77
Female	11.34% 39	7.27% 25	6.69% 23	15.41% 53	59.30% 204
18-30	13.40% 13	5.15% 5	15.46% 15	18.56% 18	47.42% 46
31-40	8.96% 6	8.96% 6	2.99% 2	10.45% 7	68.66% 46
41-50	12.77% 18	6.38% 9	3.55% 5	9.93% 14	67.38% 95
51-60	13.33% 14	6.67% 7	5.71% 6	20.95% 22	53.33% 56
61+	11.11% 8	11.11% 8	4.17% 3	22.22% 16	51.39% 37
Assemblies of God	9.62% 20	4.81% 10	5.29% 11	14.90% 31	65.38% 136
Church of God of Prophecy	11.61% 18	4.52% 7	5.16% 8	16.77% 26	61.94% 96
Church of God	18.45% 19	11.65% 12	10.68% 11	17.48% 18	41.75% 43

Table. 16 “I believe God frowns on homosexuality”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	67.15% 92	13.14% 18	6.57% 9	6.57% 9	6.57% 9
Female	69.27% 248	13.41% 48	6.70% 24	3.63% 13	6.98% 25
18-30	63.00% 63	13.00% 13	14.00% 14	3.00% 3	7.00% 7
31-40	65.22% 45	13.04% 9	13.04% 9	1.45% 1	7.25% 5
41-50	72.92% 105	9.72% 14	2.78% 4	6.25% 9	8.33% 12
51-60	70.09% 75	16.82% 18	3.74% 4	3.74% 4	5.61% 6
61+	70.13% 54	16.88% 13	2.60% 2	5.19% 4	5.19% 4
Assemblies of God	68.54% 146	15.02% 32	4.69% 10	3.76% 8	7.98% 17
Church of God of Prophecy	71.97% 113	10.83% 17	10.19% 16	3.82% 6	3.18% 5
Church of God	64.81% 70	12.96% 14	7.41% 8	5.56% 6	9.26% 10

Table 17. “I believe same-sex marriage goes against the laws of nature”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	78.52% 106	14.07% 19	1.48% 2	2.96% 4	2.96% 4
Female	77.59% 270	13.22% 46	2.87% 10	4.02% 14	2.30% 8
18-30	71.72% 71	16.16% 16	3.03% 3	5.05% 5	4.04% 4
31-40	80.60% 54	14.93% 10	0.00% 0	2.99% 2	1.49% 1
41-50	80.58% 112	10.79% 15	3.60% 5	0.72% 1	4.32% 6
51-60	80.19% 85	14.15% 15	2.83% 3	1.89% 2	0.94% 1
61+	77.03% 57	13.51% 10	1.35% 1	6.76% 5	1.35% 1
Assemblies of God	80.00% 168	12.86% 27	2.38% 5	2.38% 5	2.38% 5
Church of God of Prophecy	81.05% 124	13.73% 21	2.61% 4	2.61% 4	0.00% 0
Church of God	67.62% 71	15.24% 16	2.86% 3	7.62% 8	6.67% 7

Table 18. “I believe homosexuals choose to be homosexuals”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	49.63% 67	24.44% 33	14.81% 20	5.19% 7	5.93% 8
Female	61.10% 212	21.61% 75	7.49% 26	4.32% 15	5.48% 19
18-30	50.52% 49	25.77% 25	12.37% 12	3.09% 3	8.25% 8
31-40	58.82% 40	23.53% 16	10.29% 7	2.94% 2	4.41% 3
41-50	63.50% 87	18.25% 25	8.03% 11	2.92% 4	7.30% 10
51-60	53.33% 56	27.62% 29	11.43% 12	5.71% 6	1.90% 2
61+	63.16% 48	17.11% 13	6.58% 5	9.21% 7	3.95% 3
Assemblies of God	58.57% 123	25.71% 54	8.57% 18	2.38% 5	4.76% 10
Church of God of Prophecy	57.79% 89	18.83% 29	11.69% 18	5.19% 8	6.49% 10
Church of God	58.82% 60	20.59% 21	7.84% 8	6.86% 7	5.88% 6

Table 19. “I don’t believe homosexuals have a choice in their sexual orientation”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	14.50% 19	3.05% 4	10.69% 14	30.53% 40	41.22% 54
Female	12.08% 40	5.74% 19	8.16% 27	25.08% 83	48.94% 162
18-30	13.27% 13	5.10% 5	13.27% 13	27.55% 27	40.82% 40
31-40	13.24% 9	2.94% 2	11.76% 8	27.94% 19	44.12% 30
41-50	13.53% 18	4.51% 6	3.01% 4	22.56% 30	56.39% 75
51-60	8.16% 8	4.08% 4	9.18% 9	26.53% 26	52.04% 51
61+	20.59% 14	7.35% 5	11.76% 8	30.88% 21	29.41% 20
Assemblies of God	11.39% 23	4.46% 9	7.92% 16	27.72% 56	48.51% 98
Church of God of Prophecy	14.09% 21	4.70% 7	12.08% 18	24.83% 37	44.30% 66
Church of God	15.46% 15	6.19% 6	4.12% 4	28.87% 28	45.36% 44

Table 20. “I believe marriage in the Bible is always between one man and one woman”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	83.21% 114	7.30% 10	5.11% 7	2.92% 4	1.46% 2
Female	91.19% 321	4.55% 16	1.70% 6	1.99% 7	0.57% 2
18-30	81.63% 80	7.14% 7	6.12% 6	4.08% 4	1.02% 1
31-40	91.30% 63	2.90% 2	4.35% 3	1.45% 1	0.00% 0
41-50	89.21% 124	5.76% 8	0.00% 0	3.60% 5	1.44% 2
51-60	90.74% 98	6.48% 7	0.93% 1	0.93% 1	0.93% 1
61+	93.42% 71	2.63% 2	3.95% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	89.57% 189	5.21% 11	1.90% 4	2.84% 6	0.47% 1
Church of God of Prophecy	87.90% 138	7.01% 11	3.82% 6	1.27% 2	0.00% 0
Church of God	91.43% 96	1.90% 2	2.86% 3	1.90% 2	1.90% 2

Table 21. “I believe same-sex couples can successfully rear children”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	6.62% 9	3.68% 5	10.29% 14	19.12% 26	60.29% 82
Female	3.69% 13	7.67% 27	6.82% 24	17.33% 61	64.49% 227
18-30	6.12% 6	13.27% 13	7.14% 7	20.41% 20	53.06% 52
31-40	4.48% 3	7.46% 5	11.94% 8	11.94% 8	64.18% 43
41-50	3.50% 5	5.59% 8	6.29% 9	9.79% 14	74.83% 107
51-60	3.77% 4	1.89% 2	6.60% 7	22.64% 24	65.09% 69
61+	5.26% 4	3.95% 3	10.53% 8	25.00% 19	55.26% 42
Assemblies of God	4.78% 10	6.70% 14	5.26% 11	14.83% 31	58.33% 91
Church of God of Prophecy	3.81% 4	2.86% 3	9.52% 10	15.24% 16	68.57% 72
Church of God	3.81% 4	2.86% 3	9.52% 10	15.24% 16	68.57% 72

Table 22. “I believe the Bible does not condemn same-sex marriage”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	11.03% 15	0.74% 1	6.62% 9	21.32% 29	60.29% 82
Female	7.51% 26	2.89% 10	4.62% 16	14.45% 50	70.52% 244
18-30	4.12% 4	4.12% 4	12.37% 12	16.49% 16	62.89% 61
31-40	10.29% 7	1.47% 1	2.94% 2	10.29% 7	75.00% 5
41-50	9.86% 14	2.82% 4	3.52% 5	11.97% 17	71.83% 102
51-60	6.67% 7	0.95% 1	3.81% 4	18.10% 19	70.48% 74
61+	13.70% 10	2.74% 2	2.74% 2	24.66% 18	56.16% 41
Assemblies of God	8.13% 17	2.87% 6	4.78% 10	14.83% 31	69.38% 145
Church of God of Prophecy	7.69% 12	1.28% 2	3.85% 6	16.03% 25	71.15% 111
Church of God	6.86% 7	3.92% 4	8.82% 9	18.63% 19	61.76% 63

Table 23. “I believe same-sex couples should have the same social/legal benefits as heterosexual couples	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	8.53% 11	7.75% 10	16.28% 21	16.28% 21	51.16% 66
Female	6.08% 20	5.17% 17	10.94% 36	15.50% 51	62.31% 205
18-30	11.11% 11	12.12% 12	18.18% 18	15.15% 15	43.43% 43
31-40	4.48% 3	1.49% 1	16.42% 11	14.93% 10	62.69% 42
41-50	1.56% 2	3.13% 4	8.59% 11	11.72% 15	75.00% 96
51-60	4.04% 4	6.06% 6	14.14% 14	19.19% 19	56.57% 56
61+	16.67% 11	3.03% 2	7.58% 5	16.67% 11	56.06% 37
Assemblies of God	5.05% 10	2.53% 5	12.63% 25	14.65% 29	65.15% 129
Church of God of Prophecy	8.22% 12	10.27% 15	13.70% 20	19.86% 29	47.95% 70
Church of God	5.21% 5	3.13% 3	12.50% 12	13.54% 13	65.63% 63

Table 24. "I would not support a law allowing same-sex marriage in the Bahamas"	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	77.54% 107	5.07% 7	2.17% 3	3.62% 5	11.59% 16
Female	11.59% 16	76.22% 266	4.58% 16	1.72% 6	2.87% 10
18-30	76.77% 76	7.07% 7	6.06% 6	3.03% 3	7.07% 7
31-40	76.47% 52	8.82% 6	0.00% 0	1.47% 1	13.24% 9
41-50	80.14% 113	2.84% 4	0.71% 1	2.13% 3	14.18% 20
51-60	75.47% 80	1.89% 2	1.89% 2	4.72% 5	16.04% 17
61+	75.34% 55	4.11% 3	0.00% 0	2.74% 2	17.81% 13
Assemblies of God	82.38% 173	5.24% 11	1.43% 3	0.95% 2	10.00% 21
Church of God of Prophecy	74.68% 118	3.16% 5	1.27% 2	5.06% 8	15.82% 25
Church of God					

Table 25. “I believe the Bible is the Word of God	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	93.18% 164	6.25% 11	0.57% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Female	97.83% 405	1.69% 7	0.48% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
18-30	95.20% 119	4.00% 5	0.80% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
31-40	100.00% 76	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
41-50	96.95% 159	3.05% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
51-60	97.74% 130	1.50% 2	0.75% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
61+	90.91% 90	9.09% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	98.70% 227	0.87% 2	0.43% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Church of God of Prophecy	96.26% 206	3.74% 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Church of God	92.97% 119	7.03% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0

Table 26. “I believe the Bible is the only authority for How Christians should live their lives”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	78.29% 137	15.43% 27	4.57% 8	1.14% 2	0.57% 1
Female	85.40% 351	10.71% 44	2.68% 11	0.97% 4	0.24% 1
18-30	63.20% 79	24.80% 31	9.60% 12	1.60% 2	0.80% 1
31-40	85.53% 65	13.16% 10	1.32% 1		
41-50	88.96% 145	7.98% 13	1.23% 2	1.23% 2	0.61% 1
51-60	92.37% 121	5.34% 7	1.53% 2	0.76% 1	
61+	85.71% 84	12.24% 12	1.02% 1	1.02% 1	
Assemblies of God	85.59% 196	9.61% 22	3.93% 9	0.44% 1	0.44% 1
Church of God of Prophecy	80.84% 173	14.02% 30	2.34% 5	2.34% 5	0.47% 1
Church of God	86.51% 109	12.70% 16	0.79% 1		

Table 27. “I believe the Bible is one of several sources for ethical guidance.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	50.91% 84	32.12% 53	6.67% 11	4.85% 8	5.45% 9
Female	61.36% 243	26.77% 106	3.79% 15	2.78% 11	5.30% 21
18-30	46.67% 56	37.50% 45	10.00% 12	4.17% 5	1.67% 2
31-40	57.33% 43	34.67% 26	2.67% 2	2.67% 2	2.67% 2
41-50	63.29% 100	20.25% 32	4.43% 7	5.70% 9	6.33% 10
51-60	64.00% 80	22.40% 28	3.20% 4	0.80% 1	9.60% 12
61+	61.11% 55	32.22% 29	0.00% 0	2.22% 2	4.44% 4
Assemblies of God	55.71% 122	27.40% 60	4.11% 9	5.02% 11	7.76% 17
Church of God of Prophecy	59.72% 126	28.91% 61	2.84% 6	3.79% 8	4.74% 10
Church of God	62.93% 73	26.72% 31	7.76% 9	0.86% 1	1.72% 2

Table 28. “Generally, how frequently do you read the Bible?”	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Only if there is a need
Male	0.57% 1	43.68% 76	37.93% 66	6.32% 11	11.49% 20
Female	0.73% 3	55.85% 229	31.71% 130	4.88% 20	6.83% 28
18-30	0.82% 1	23.77% 29	38.52% 47	13.93% 17	22.95% 28
31-40	1.35% 1	54.05% 40	35.14% 26	4.05% 3	5.41% 4
41-50	1.22% 2	54.88% 90	34.76% 57	4.27% 7	4.88% 8
51-60	0.00% 0	58.33% 77	34.85% 46	2.27% 3	4.55% 6
61+	0.00% 0	70.71% 70	25.25% 25	1.01% 1	3.03% 3
Assemblies of God	0.87% 2	55.22% 127	30.87% 71	3.91% 9	9.13% 21
Church of God of Prophecy	0.47% 1	47.64% 101	38.21% 81	5.66% 12	8.02% 17
Church of God	0.00% 0	50.39% 64	34.65% 44	6.30% 8	8.66% 11

Table 29. “I believe Parents should provide ethical guidance.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	74.12% 126	23.53% 40	1.76% 3	0.00% 0	0.59% 1
Female	79.71% 326	18.09% 74	1.22% 5	0.24% 1	0.73% 3
18-30	66.39% 81	30.33% 37	2.46% 3	0.82% 1	0.00% 0
31-40	82.89% 63	17.11% 13	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
41-50	82.82% 135	15.95% 26	0.61% 1	0.00% 0	0.61% 1
51-60	83.59% 107	15.63% 20	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.78% 1
61+	72.63% 69	25.26% 24	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.11% 2
Assemblies of God	79.39% 181	19.30% 44	0.44% 1	0.00% 0	0.88% 2
Church of God of Prophecy	78.60% 169	20.47% 44	0.47% 1	0.00% 0	0.47% 1
Church of God	73.33% 88	21.67% 26	3.33% 4	0.83% 1	0.83% 1

Table 30. "I am/will be teaching my children the same ethical principles my parents taught me."	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	57.40% 97	36.69% 62	2.96% 5	2.96% 5	0.00% 0
Female	61.73% 250	32.35% 131	3.46% 14	2.22% 9	0.25% 1
18-30	50.41% 62	38.21% 47	7.32% 9	3.25% 4	0.81% 1
31-40	53.95% 41	36.84% 28	5.26% 4	3.95% 3	0.00% 0
41-50	65.22% 105	31.68% 51	1.24% 2	1.86% 3	0.00% 0
51-60	62.20% 79	33.07% 42	1.57% 2	3.15% 4	0.00% 0
61+	63.16% 60	34.74% 33	1.05% 1	1.05% 1	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	60.27% 135	33.04% 74	3.13% 7	3.57% 8	0.00% 0
Church of God of Prophecy	57.48% 123	36.45% 78	3.27% 7	2.34% 5	0.47% 1
Church of God	64.23% 79	30.89% 38	3.25% 4	1.63% 2	0.00% 0

Table 31. "I Believe the Church should provide ethical guidance"	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	68.05% 115	28.40% 48	2.96% 5	0.59% 1	0.00% 0
Female	72.66% 287	25.32% 100	1.77% 7	0.00% 0	0.25% 1
18-30	63.33% 76	30.83% 37	5.83% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
31-40	73.33% 55	25.33% 19	1.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
41-50	75.47% 120	22.64% 36	1.26% 2	0.00% 0	0.63% 1
51-60	73.17% 90	26.02% 32	0.00% 0	0.81% 1	0.00% 0
61+	70.53% 67	29.47% 28	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	71.17% 158	26.58% 59	1.80% 4	0.00% 0	0.45% 1
Church of God of Prophecy	73.93% 156	25.12% 53	0.95% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Church of God	68.70% 79	27.83% 32	2.61% 3	0.87% 1	0.00% 0

Table 32. “I think the Bible should shape the beliefs of the Christian church”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	84.12% 143	14.12% 24	1.18% 2	0.59% 1	0.00% 0
Female	88.40% 358	10.37% 42	0.74% 3	0.25% 1	0.25% 1
18-30	77.69% 94	19.01% 23	2.48% 3	0.83% 1	0.00% 0
31-40	89.33% 67	9.33% 7	1.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
41-50	90.57% 144	8.18% 13	0.00% 0	0.63% 1	0.63% 1
51-60	92.19% 118	7.03% 9	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
61+	82.29% 79	17.71% 17	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	91.40% 202	7.69% 17	0.90% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Church of God of Prophecy	89.25% 191	9.81% 21	0.47% 1	0.47% 1	0.00% 0
Church of God	76.23% 93	20.49% 25	1.64% 2	0.82% 1	0.82% 1

Table 33. “A Trusted Friend is a good source of ethical guidance”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	11.04% 18	30.06% 49	22.70% 37	23.93% 39	12.27% 20
Female	14.29% 57	31.08% 124	22.81% 91	24.31% 97	7.52% 30
18-30	13.22% 16	25.62% 31	33.88% 41	19.01% 23	8.26% 10
31-40	7.89% 6	30.26% 23	26.32% 20	26.32% 20	9.21% 7
41-50	14.56% 23	32.91% 52	20.89% 33	22.15% 35	9.49% 15
51-60	13.49% 17	35.71% 45	15.87% 20	26.98% 34	7.94% 10
61+	20.45% 18	26.14% 23	15.91% 14	29.55% 26	7.95% 7
Assemblies of God	11.01% 24	34.40% 75	20.18% 44	24.77% 54	9.63% 21
Church of God of Prophecy	12.86% 27	27.14% 57	24.76% 52	25.71% 54	9.52% 20
Church of God	19.17% 23	31.67% 38	20.00% 24	20.83% 25	8.33% 10

Table 34. “I believe its okay to do anything I feel is okay as long as it doesn’t hurt anyone”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	5.29% 9	12.94% 22	10.59% 18	29.41% 50	41.76% 71
Female	4.77% 19	7.79% 31	6.53% 26	34.67% 138	46.23% 184
18-30	6.56% 8	15.57% 19	12.30% 15	33.61% 41	31.97% 39
31-40	4.05% 3	5.41% 4	9.46% 7	36.49% 27	44.59% 33
41-50	6.33% 10	6.33% 10	6.96% 11	27.22% 43	53.16% 84
51-60	4.62% 6	6.15% 8	4.62% 6	36.15% 47	48.46% 63
61+	5.56% 5	12.22% 11	5.56% 5	36.67% 33	40.00% 36
Assemblies of God	3.13% 7	7.59% 17	7.59% 17	32.14% 72	49.55% 111
Church of God of Prophecy	4.81% 10	5.29% 11	6.73% 14	36.54% 76	46.63% 97
Church of God	10.74% 13	17.36% 21	8.26% 10	28.93% 35	34.71% 42

Table 35 “I Believe God gives everyone the freedom to choose their ethical behaviour”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	61.59% 101	30.49% 50	5.49% 9	2.44% 4	0.00% 0
Female	56.58% 228	35.73% 144	3.72% 15	1.99% 8	1.99% 8
18-30	52.42% 65	37.90% 47	8.06% 10	1.61% 2	0.00% 0
31-40	57.53% 42	35.62% 26	4.11% 3	0.00% 0	2.74% 2
41-50	61.69% 95	31.17% 48	2.60% 4	1.95% 3	2.60% 4
51-60	62.02% 80	30.23% 39	1.55% 2	4.65% 6	1.55% 2
61+	57.29% 55	38.54% 37	3.13% 3	1.04% 1	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	57.21% 127	35.14% 78	3.15% 7	2.70% 6	1.80% 4
Church of God of Prophecy	59.91% 127	33.49% 71	3.30% 7	3.30% 7	1.89% 4
Church of God	60.83% 73	30.83% 37	5.83% 7	1.67% 2	0.83% 1

Table 36. “My pastor gives good guidance on moral living and ethical behaviour”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Male	59.04% 98	36.75% 61	2.41% 4	0.60% 1	1.20% 2
Female	64.68% 260	31.84% 128	1.99% 8	1.00% 4	0.50% 2
18-30	49.17% 59	45.00% 54	5.00% 6	0.83% 1	0.00% 0
31-40	58.67% 44	40.00% 30	0.00% 0	1.33% 1	0.00% 0
41-50	69.62% 110	25.95% 41	3.16% 5	1.27% 2	0.00% 0
51-60	70.31% 90	25.78% 33	0.78% 1	0.78% 1	2.34% 3
61+	60.64% 57	37.23% 35	0.00% 0	1.06% 1	1.06% 1
Assemblies of God	67.26% 150	29.60% 66	1.79% 4	0.45% 1	0.90% 2
Church of God of Prophecy	62.20% 130	35.41% 74	1.44% 3	0.48% 1	0.48% 1
Church of God	58.20% 71	35.25% 43	4.10% 5	2.46% 3	0.00% 0

Table 37 “I believe school teachers should guide ethical decisions/behaviour of students”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	35.40% 217	50.24% 308	5.71% 35	7.34% 45	1.31% 8
Male	32.56% 56	54.65% 94	6.40% 11	5.23% 9	1.16% 2
Female	36.27% 148	50.00% 204	5.39% 22	6.86% 28	1.47% 6
18-30	35.25% 43	51.64% 63	9.02% 11	3.28% 4	0.82% 1
31-40	35.53% 27	51.32% 39	7.89% 6	5.26% 4	0.00% 0
41-50	37.04% 60	48.77% 79	6.79% 11	6.17% 10	1.23% 2
51-60	36.15% 47	50.00% 65	1.54% 2	9.23% 12	3.08% 4
61+	30.21% 29	53.13% 51	3.13% 3	12.50% 12	1.04% 1
Assemblies of God	37.17% 84	50.00% 113	6.19% 14	4.87% 11	1.77% 4
Church of God of Prophecy	30.88% 67	53.00% 115	5.07% 11	9.22% 20	1.84% 4
Church of God	35.48% 44	53.23% 66	4.84% 6	6.45% 8	0.00% 0

Table 38. “The songs we sing in church provide a good pattern for living.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	50.16%	43.09%	4.44%	1.97%	0.33%
Male	49.10% 82	41.32% 69	6.59% 11	2.99% 5	0.00% 0
Female	50.37% 206	44.01% 180	3.67% 15	1.47% 6	0.49% 2
18-30	36.89% 45	55.74% 68	4.92% 6	2.46% 3	0.00% 0
31-40	50.00% 38	44.74% 34	2.63% 2	2.63% 2	0.00% 0
41-50	54.72% 87	38.99% 62	3.77% 6	1.26% 2	1.26% 2
51-60	52.34% 67	42.97% 55	3.91% 5	0.78% 1	0.00% 0
61+	50.00% 48	40.63% 39	6.25% 6	3.13% 3	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	52.63% 120	42.11% 96	3.51% 8	1.75% 4	0.00% 0
Church of God of Prophecy	45.12% 97	46.51% 100	6.05% 13	2.33% 5	0.00% 0
Church of God	55.08% 65	39.83% 47	0.85% 1	2.54% 3	1.69% 2

Table 39. “Some secular songs demonstrate examples of a good lifestyle”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	12.48%	45.03%	17.88%	16.02%	8.60%
Male	14.46% 24	46.39% 77	19.28% 32	12.05% 20	7.83% 13
Female	10.66% 42	45.43% 179	18.02% 71	17.77% 70	8.12% 32
18-30	12.20% 15	43.90% 54	23.58% 29	13.01% 16	7.32% 9
31-40	9.21% 7	48.68% 37	18.42% 14	15.79% 12	7.89% 6
41-50	13.07% 20	47.06% 72	13.73% 21	14.38% 22	11.76% 18
51-60	11.20% 14	50.40% 63	18.40% 23	15.20% 19	4.80% 6
61+	12.09% 11	36.26% 33	17.58% 16	24.18% 22	9.89% 9
Assemblies of God	8.14% 18	40.27% 89	18.55% 41	22.62% 50	10.41% 23
Church of God of Prophecy	12.98% 27	49.04% 102	19.71% 41	12.02% 25	6.25% 13
Church of God	17.80% 21	46.61% 55	13.56% 16	11.02% 13	11.02% 13

Table 40. “I believe the Bible should influence the laws of the Bahamas”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	71.31% 435	19.51% 119	4.59% 28	2.95% 18	1.64% 10
Male	70.18% 120	17.54% 30	4.09% 7	5.26% 9	2.92% 5
Female	71.43% 290	20.69% 84	4.68% 19	1.97% 8	1.23% 5
18-30	51.61% 64	27.42% 34	12.90% 16	4.84% 6	3.23% 4
31-40	75.68% 56	16.22% 12	4.05% 3	4.05% 3	0.00% 0
41-50	76.54% 124	16.05% 26	1.85% 3	4.32% 7	1.23% 2
51-60	74.42% 96	22.48% 29	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	2.33% 3
61+	79.38% 77	15.46% 15	2.06% 2	2.06% 2	1.03% 1
Assemblies of God	74.34% 168	18.58% 42	3.10% 7	2.65% 6	1.33% 3
Church of God of Prophecy	68.08% 145	20.66% 44	6.10% 13	3.29% 7	1.88% 4
Church of God	71.20% 89	20.00% 25	3.20% 4	4.00% 5	1.60% 2

Table 41. “I believe the environment is affected by the actions I take”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	65.05% 281	28.24% 122	3.47% 15	1.39% 6	1.85% 8
Male	67.86% 76	28.57% 32	1.79% 2	0.00% 0	1.79% 2
Female	63.30% 188	28.96% 86	4.04% 12	1.68% 5	2.02% 6
18-30	67.69% 44	27.69% 18	3.08% 2	0.00% 0	1.54% 1
31-40	58.33% 35	30.00% 18	6.67% 4	0.00% 0	5.00% 3
41-50	64.84% 83	28.13% 36	3.91% 5	0.78% 1	2.34% 3
51-60	66.67% 66	28.28% 28	3.03% 3	2.02% 2	0.00% 0
61+	63.08% 41	30.77% 20	1.54% 1	4.62% 3	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	60.92% 106	32.18% 56	2.87% 5	1.72% 3	2.30% 4
Church of God of Prophecy	70.37% 95	25.93% 35	1.48% 2	0.74% 1	1.48% 2
Church of God	61.29% 57	27.96% 26	6.45% 6	2.15% 2	2.15% 2

Table 42. “I believe the environment is important for human survival,”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	71.99% 311	25.93% 112	1.39% 6	0.23% 1	0.46% 2
Male	70.91% 78	27.27% 30	0.91% 1	0.91% 1	0.00% 0
Female	73.15% 218	24.83% 74	1.68% 5	0.00% 0	0.34% 1
18-30	70.77% 46	26.15% 17	3.08% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
31-40	69.49% 41	25.42% 15	3.39% 2	0.00% 0	1.69% 1
41-50	76.77% 76	23.23% 23	1.54% 2	0.77% 1	0.77% 1
51-60	68.25% 43	23.23% 23	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
61+	68.25% 43	31.75% 20	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	72.99% 127	26.44% 46	0.00% 0	0.57% 1	0.00% 0
Church of God of Prophecy	74.26% 101	22.79% 31	2.21% 3	0.00% 0	0.74% 1
Church of God	65.22% 60	30.43% 28	3.26% 3	0.00% 0	1.09% 1

Table 43. “I believe man-made development can negatively impact the environment.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	53.66% 227	31.91% 135	7.80% 33	4.96% 21	1.65% 7
Male	54.13% 59	33.03% 36	6.42% 7	4.59% 5	1.83% 2
Female	51.55% 150	32.65% 95	8.93% 26	5.15% 15	1.72% 5
18-30	54.69% 35	25.00% 16	6.25% 4	10.94% 7	3.13% 2
31-40	48.28% 28	37.93% 22	5.17% 3	6.90% 4	1.72% 1
41-50	53.54% 68	28.35% 36	11.02% 14	4.72% 6	2.36% 3
51-60	51.00% 51	38.00% 38	7.00% 7	3.00% 3	1.00% 1
61+	55.00% 33	35.00% 21	8.33% 5	1.67% 1	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	48.24% 82	32.35% 55	8.82% 15	6.47% 11	4.12% 7
Church of God of Prophecy	58.96% 79	32.84% 44	4.48% 6	3.73% 5	0.00% 0
Church of God	52.81% 47	31.46% 28	11.24% 10	4.49% 4	0.00% 0

Table 44. “I believe man-made development can be done in a way that is not harmful to the environment.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	43.54% 182	40.91% 171	8.61% 36	3.11% 13	3.83% 16
Male	51.85% 56	39.81% 43	4.63% 5	1.85% 2	1.85% 2
Female	39.37% 113	41.81% 120	10.80% 31	3.83% 11	4.18% 12
18-30	45.31% 29	39.06% 25	10.94% 7	3.13% 2	1.56% 1
31-40	45.00% 27	36.67% 22	6.67% 4	3.33% 2	8.33% 5
41-50	44.09% 56	41.73% 53	7.87% 10	3.15% 4	3.15% 4
51-60	40.82% 40	40.82% 40	13.27% 13	2.04% 2	3.06% 3
61+	40.00% 22	49.09% 27	3.64% 2	5.45% 3	1.82% 1
Assemblies of God	44.31% 74	42.51% 71	7.19% 12	2.40% 4	3.59% 6
Church of God of Prophecy	49.63% 67	36.30% 49	9.63% 13	2.22% 3	2.22% 3
Church of God	29.07% 25	51.16% 44	9.30% 8	6.98% 6	3.49% 3

Table 45, “I believe how we treat the environment depends on our upbringing.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	48.69% 205	42.99% 181	4.04% 17	2.85% 12	1.43% 6
Male	49.07% 53	42.59% 46	6.48% 7	0.93% 1	0.93% 1
Female	48.61% 140	44.44% 128	3.13% 9	2.78% 8	1.04% 3
18-30	55.56% 35	39.68% 25	3.17% 2	1.59% 1	0.00% 0
31-40	47.46% 28	45.76% 27	3.39% 2	1.69% 1	1.69% 1
41-50	50.79% 64	40.48% 51	6.35% 8	1.59% 2	0.79% 1
51-60	48.45% 47	43.30% 42	3.09% 3	4.12% 4	1.03% 1
61+	40.68% 24	52.54% 31	3.39% 2	3.39% 2	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	47.95% 82	45.61% 78	2.34% 4	2.92% 5	1.17% 2
Church of God of Prophecy	48.46% 63	44.62% 58	3.85% 5	1.54% 2	1.54% 2
Church of God	50.56% 45	39.33% 35	5.62% 5	3.37% 3	1.12% 1

Table 46. “I believe littering is a moral issue.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	44.02% 184	42.11% 176	5.50% 23	6.22% 26	2.15% 9
Male	39.25% 42	47.66% 51	4.67% 5	6.54% 7	1.87% 2
Female	44.79% 129	40.97% 118	5.90% 17	6.25% 18	2.08% 6
18-30	37.10% 23	45.16% 28	11.29% 7	4.84% 3	1.61% 1
31-40	43.10% 25	41.38% 24	6.90% 4	5.17% 3	3.45% 2
41-50	44.09% 56	41.73% 53	6.30% 8	3.15% 4	4.72% 6
51-60	48.96% 47	39.58% 38	2.08% 2	9.38% 9	0.00% 0
61+	39.34% 24	47.54% 29	3.28% 2	9.84% 6	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	44.71% 76	44.12% 75	3.53% 6	5.29% 9	2.35% 4
Church of God of Prophecy	42.31% 55	43.08% 56	6.92% 9	5.38% 7	2.31% 3
Church of God	44.44% 40	38.89% 35	6.67% 6	7.78% 7	2.22% 2

Table 47. “I believe the government is responsible to keep the environment healthy.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	22.36% 89	37.19% 148	6.03% 24	22.36% 89	12.06% 48
Male	29.70% 30	39.60% 40	4.95% 5	16.83% 17	8.91% 9
Female	17.82% 49	37.82% 104	6.91% 19	24.36% 67	13.09% 36
18-30	13.33% 8	41.67% 25	11.67% 7	25.00% 15	8.33% 5
31-40	17.24% 10	31.03% 18	5.17% 3	29.31% 17	17.24% 10
41-50	20.83% 25	36.67% 44	5.00% 6	19.17% 23	18.33% 22
51-60	25.88% 22	41.18% 35	3.53% 3	24.71% 21	4.71% 4
61+	25.42% 15	37.29% 22	8.47% 5	18.64% 11	10.17% 6
Assemblies of God	21.60% 35	36.42% 59	6.17% 10	23.46% 38	12.35% 20
Church of God of Prophecy	20.33% 25	35.77% 44	4.07% 5	26.83% 33	13.01% 16
Church of God	22.09% 19	41.86% 36	10.47% 9	16.28% 14	9.30% 8

Table 48. “I believe the church should not engage the debate about protecting certain lands from developers.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	8.52% 35	11.19% 46	21.65% 89	34.06% 140	24.57% 101
Male	11.32% 12	15.09% 16	15.09% 16	35.85% 38	22.64% 24
Female	6.38% 18	9.22% 26	24.82% 70	33.69% 95	25.89% 73
18-30	1.64% 1	3.28% 2	31.15% 19	37.70% 23	26.23% 16
31-40	6.78% 4	13.56% 8	25.42% 15	30.51% 18	23.73% 14
41-50	6.40% 8	11.20% 14	17.60% 22	33.60% 42	31.20% 39
51-60	12.90% 12	10.75% 10	20.43% 19	33.33% 31	22.58% 21
61+	8.62% 5	13.79% 8	20.69% 12	39.66% 23	17.24% 10
Assemblies of God	7.14% 12	8.33% 14	23.21% 39	34.52% 58	26.79% 45
Church of God of Prophecy	6.20% 8	13.18% 17	16.28% 21	37.98% 49	26.36% 34
Church of God	10.71% 9	13.10% 11	28.57% 24	27.38% 23	20.24% 17

Table 49. “I believe development and job creation is a priority over preserving natural habitats.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	12.34% 49	20.40% 81	19.65% 78	28.21% 112	19.40% 77
Male	10.48% 11	20.95% 22	17.14% 18	29.52% 31	21.90% 23
Female	10.74% 29	21.11% 57	20.74% 56	28.52% 77	18.89% 51
18-30	4.76% 3	26.98% 17	30.16% 19	19.05% 12	19.05% 12
31-40	12.50% 7	16.07% 9	28.57% 16	26.79% 15	16.07% 9
41-50	11.76% 14	20.17% 24	20.17% 24	29.41% 35	18.49% 22
51-60	12.09% 11	20.88% 19	10.99% 10	34.07% 31	21.98% 20
61+	15.09% 8	18.87% 10	15.09% 8	26.42% 14	24.53% 13
Assemblies of God	13.66% 22	18.01% 29	18.01% 29	29.81% 48	20.50% 33
Church of God of Prophecy	9.84% 12	20.49% 25	21.31% 26	28.69% 35	19.67% 24
Church of God	9.30% 8	29.07% 25	23.26% 20	23.26% 20	15.12% 13

Table 50. “I believe developers should be allowed to dredge harbors to accommodate touristic vessels.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	15.21% 61	17.71% 71	19.45% 78	23.44% 94	24.19% 97
Male	16.50% 17	31.07% 32	19.42% 20	18.45% 19	14.56% 15
Female	13.45% 37	13.45% 37	19.64% 54	25.82% 71	27.64% 76
18-30	6.45% 4	12.90% 8	30.65% 19	30.65% 19	19.35% 12
31-40	20.34% 12	11.86% 7	22.03% 13	27.12% 16	18.64% 11
41-50	15.38% 18	17.09% 20	14.53% 17	23.93% 28	29.06% 34
51-60	13.83% 13	22.34% 21	19.15% 18	17.02% 16	27.66% 26
61+	16.07% 9	23.21% 13	17.86% 10	21.43% 12	21.43% 12
Assemblies of God	9.55% 15	18.47% 29	19.75% 31	24.84% 39	27.39% 43
Church of God of Prophecy	16.28% 21	19.38% 25	19.38% 25	25.58% 33	19.38% 25
Church of God	20.93% 18	17.44% 15	22.09% 19	19.77% 17	19.77% 17

Table 51. “I think the creation of crawfish fishing season is a means to keep the prices high.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	10.05% 41	10.78% 44	16.18% 66	37.50% 153	25.49% 104
Male	14.29% 15	10.48% 11	16.19% 17	39.05% 41	20.00% 21
Female	7.14% 20	10.36% 29	16.79% 47	38.57% 108	27.14% 76
18-30	4.76% 3	9.52% 6	20.63% 13	30.16% 19	34.92% 22
31-40	13.33% 8	13.33% 8	20.00% 12	33.33% 20	20.00% 12
41-50	7.38% 9	11.48% 14	18.85% 23	36.89% 45	25.41% 31
51-60	14.74% 14	12.63% 12	8.42% 8	38.95% 37	25.26% 24
61+	5.56% 3	3.70% 2	14.81% 8	55.56% 30	20.37% 11
Assemblies of God	8.43% 14	8.43% 14	14.46% 24	38.55% 64	30.12% 50
Church of God of Prophecy	11.63% 15	7.75% 10	16.28% 21	39.53% 51	24.81% 32
Church of God	9.64% 8	20.48% 17	20.48% 17	28.92% 24	20.48% 17

Table 52. “I believe being a Christian incudes concern for the environment.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	42.68% 172	44.67% 180	6.95% 28	3.72% 15	1.99% 8
Male	49.06% 52	39.62% 42	6.60% 7	3.77% 4	0.94% 1
Female	40.00% 110	47.27% 130	7.64% 21	2.55% 7	2.55% 7
18-30	46.77% 29	38.71% 24	9.68% 6	3.23% 2	1.61% 1
31-40	32.14% 18	53.57% 30	5.36% 3	1.79% 1	7.14% 4
41-50	43.22% 51	46.61% 55	5.93% 7	2.54% 3	1.69% 2
51-60	43.62% 41	42.55% 40	7.45% 7	5.32% 5	1.06% 1
61+	41.38% 24	46.55% 27	8.62% 5	3.45% 2	0.00% 0
Assemblies of God	42.94% 70	47.24% 77	3.68% 6	3.68% 6	2.45% 4
Church of God of Prophecy	41.86% 54	46.51% 60	7.75% 10	2.33% 3	1.55% 2
Church of God	40.96% 34	40.96% 34	12.05% 10	3.61% 3	2.41% 2

Table 53. “When staying at a hotel I prefer to have sheets and towels changed daily”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	47.48% 198	25.18% 105	5.76% 24	17.75% 74	3.84% 16
Male	47.17% 50	27.36% 29	6.60% 7	16.04% 17	2.83% 3
Female	46.50% 133	24.48% 70	5.59% 16	18.88% 54	4.55% 13
18-30	32.81% 21	28.13% 18	12.50% 8	21.88% 14	4.69% 3
31-40	44.07% 26	16.95% 10	5.08% 3	23.73% 14	10.17% 6
41-50	50.82% 62	26.23% 32	4.10% 5	16.39% 20	2.46% 3
51-60	52.08% 50	22.92% 22	4.17% 4	18.75% 18	2.08% 2
61+	45.76% 27	35.59% 21	5.08% 3	10.17% 6	3.39% 2
Assemblies of God	46.06% 76	24.85% 41	6.06% 10	20.61% 34	2.42% 4
Church of God of Prophecy	47.73% 63	30.30% 40	3.79% 5	14.39% 19	3.79% 5
Church of God	50.00% 44	19.32% 17	7.95% 7	14.77% 13	7.95% 7

Table 54. “When shopping I use re-usable bags instead of disposable paper or plastic bags.”	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Certain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Overall	12.19% 49	23.88% 96	13.43% 54	40.80% 164	9.70% 39
Male	12.50% 13	32.69% 34	18.27% 19	30.77% 32	5.77% 6
Female	10.22% 28	21.17% 58	12.04% 33	45.62% 125	10.95% 30
18-30	9.52% 6	19.05% 12	11.11% 7	46.03% 29	14.29% 9
31-40	13.56% 8	27.12% 16	11.86% 7	33.90% 20	13.56% 8
41-50	8.77% 10	23.68% 27	12.28% 14	48.25% 55	7.02% 8
51-60	13.40% 13	25.77% 25	16.49% 16	34.02% 33	10.31% 10
61+	9.26% 5	25.93% 14	16.67% 9	44.44% 24	3.70% 2
Assemblies of God	13.50% 22	22.09% 36	9.20% 15	45.40% 74	9.82% 16
Church of God of Prophecy	9.52% 12	27.78% 35	15.87% 20	38.89% 49	7.94% 10
Church of God	11.76% 10	24.71% 21	15.29% 13	35.29% 30	12.94% 11

Appendices

Recruitment letter to Church Leaders

PhD Project Survey/University of Birmingham, UK

Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics

Primary contact: Dr. Woodley Thompson P O Box EE16367 Nassau, Bahamas

Mobile: [242] 457-2215

Email: wct354@bham.ac.uk

University of Birmingham contact: Dr. Andrew Davies

Department of Theology and Religion University of Birmingham

Edgbaston Birmingham, UK B15 2TT

Dear Leader,

I am writing to invite your participation in an exciting PhD project that is looking at the way Pentecostals use the Bible when faced with complex ethical issues.

As you would be aware, the issue of gambling has created significant public and private dialogue among church folk and the wider Bahamian society within recent times. This project seeks to evaluate the way Pentecostals in particular used the Bible to arrive at their decision on this subject. In addition, discussion of the issue of same-sex marriage is getting more common as our neighbours to the west have begun to legalize same-sex marriage in a number of U.S. States. Similarly, we wish to evaluate how the Bible is used to take a position on this issue.

This project will then compare the approach to both issues in respect of Biblical involvement and form a model that can be used to predict how a Pentecostal might respond to the issue of personal and collective responsibility for our environment.

The significance of this project is far reaching, as it will enable you as a leader to discover how Pentecostals in the Bahamas are guided by the Bible in the formulation of their ethics.

In the first instance, we would like to come and discuss the project in more detail, so that you can appreciate fully what we would like to do and so that you can ask questions to clarify the nature of the project. We believe that this is an important project and look forward to exploring your participation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Dr. Woodley C. Thompson

Principal Investigator *Pentecostal Ethics*

Statement for Church Notices

PhD Project Survey/University of Birmingham, UK

Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics

Primary contact: Dr. Woodley Thompson P O Box EE16367 Nassau, Bahamas

Mobile: [242] 457-2215

Email: wct354@bham.ac.uk

University of Birmingham contact: Dr. Andrew Davies

Department of Theology and Religion University of Birmingham

Edgbaston Birmingham, UK B15 2TT

The Pastors have agreed to participate in an exciting project to evaluate how Pentecostals use the Bible to make a decision on complex ethical issues.

It is expected that a researcher will be visiting our worship services, events and programmes during the months of <add in the month range>. Please make the person feel welcome. A survey will be given out prior to the beginning of the service and you are kindly asked to fill it out and turn it in to any usher at the end before you leave. It is also the case that a small number of us will be invited to talk with the researcher about our views on gambling, same-sex marriage and the environment, to help the person understand how we use the Bible to help us make decisions. Participation in any such conversation will be entirely voluntary. We look forward to meeting this researcher and participating in such an important project. For further information about this project, Pastor <name> has been designated the contact person, so in the first instance please direct any enquiries to him/her.

Statement for Individual Interviewees

PhD Project Survey/University of Birmingham, UK

Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics

Primary contact: Dr. Woodley Thompson P O Box EE16367 Nassau, Bahamas

Mobile: [242] 457-2215

Email: wct354@bham.ac.uk

University of Birmingham contact: Dr. Andrew Davies

Department of Theology and Religion University of Birmingham

Edgbaston Birmingham, UK B15 2TT

Thank you for being a participant in the “Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics” project. We appreciate your willingness to be interviewed.

Essentially this project is interested in discovering how Pentecostals engage the Bible when faced with complex ethical issues. So, we will ask some general questions about your beliefs and values. We will also ask specific questions with regard to your personal opinion on gambling, same-sex marriage and the environment. We will compile your responses with those of other Pentecostals to see if there is common ground for the use of the Bible in addressing ethical problems. With your permission the interview will be recorded and notes will be taken as well, but your name and any personal identifying data will not be retained, and your responses will be kept entirely anonymous. There is no reward for participating in this research or penalty from withdrawing from the research at any time which you may do up to two weeks from time of interview.

Please feel free to ask the researcher any questions of clarification at this point. Thank you.

PhD Project Survey/University of Birmingham, UK

Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics

Primary contact: Dr. Woodley Thompson P O Box EE16367 Nassau, Bahamas

Mobile: [242] 457-2215

Email: wct354@bham.ac.uk

University of Birmingham contact: Dr. Andrew Davies

Department of Theology and Religion University of Birmingham

Edgbaston Birmingham, UK B15 2TT

“Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics” PhD Project Individual Consent Form

Please read the statement for Individual Interviewees.

You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time up to two weeks from the time of interview without affecting your relationship with any other parties (church or researcher). To withdraw from the project please send an email to me at:

wct354@bham.ac.uk

Or write to me at P. O. Box EE16367 Nassau, Bahamas

Please do not hesitate to ask any question either before the interview starts or afterwards. We are very happy to share the findings at appropriate points in the research process. However, your name will not be associated with research findings in any way, and your identity will be known only to the researcher and the pastor who suggested your participation. There are no risks associated with your participation in this study. The data gathered may be used in future publications and or presentations.

The expected benefit associated with your participation is that you will be able to assess your personal connection to the Bible and its involvement in your decision-making process and make any adjustments you deem helpful to the practice of your faith.

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature of the project and its procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

Print Name

Signature of Participant

Date

Dr. Woodley C. Thompson
Principal Investigator *Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics PhD Project*

Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics PhD Project: Focus Group Consent Form

PhD Project Survey/University of Birmingham, UK

Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics

Primary contact: Dr. Woodley Thompson P O Box EE16367 Nassau, Bahamas

Mobile: [242] 457-2215

Email: wct354@bham.ac.uk

University of Birmingham contact: Dr. Andrew Davies

Department of Theology and Religion University of Birmingham

Edgbaston Birmingham, UK B15 2TT

Please read the statement for Individual Interviewees.

You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time up to two weeks from time of interview without affecting your relationship with any other parties (church or researcher). To withdraw from the project please send an email to me at: wct354@bham.ac.uk or write to me at P. O. Box EE16367 Nassau, Bahamas.

Please do not hesitate to ask any questions either before the focus group starts or afterwards. Once it has begun it would be best to let the focus group finish before raising any further questions regarding the project. We are very happy to share the findings with you once the research is complete. However, your name will not be associated with research findings in any way, and your identity as a participant in this focus group will be known only to the researchers and the pastors who suggested your participation, and, of course, your fellow participants this evening. Data may be used in future publications/presentations.

There are no risks associated with your participation in this study.

The expected benefits associated with your participation are that you are able to listen to other church members tell how they arrived at a decision on ethical issues facing the church and what role the Bible played in that process. You also have an opportunity to share how you approached the issue. It is hoped that your participation in this conversation will be an encouragement to you as part of a reflective experience.

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature of the project and its procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

Print Name

Signature of Participant

Date

Dr. Woodley C. Thompson: Principal Investigator *Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics PhD Project*

Survey Questionnaire

Survey: Use of the Bible in Pentecostal Ethics PhD Project/ University of Birmingham

Participation in this questionnaire is voluntary and your responses will be kept entirely anonymous. There is no reward for participating in this research or penalty from withdrawing from the research at any time. By completing this questionnaire you consent to participate in this project. However you may withdraw from this project up to two weeks from today.

Please circle answers that apply:

Which group do you belong to?

Assemblies Of God

Church of God of Prophecy

Church of God

Are you?

Male

Female

Are you a leader in your church?

Yes/No

What is your age in years?

18-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

61+

Do you consider yourself to be baptized in the Holy Spirit?

Yes/No

Do you speak in tongues?

Yes/No

Have you ever been healed as a result of prayer?
Yes/No

Generally, how frequently do you read the Bible?

Never
Daily
Weekly
Monthly
Only if there is a need

Section 1

INSTRUCTIONS. This section is concerned with your opinion about the source of ethics. Read the sentence carefully and think, 'Do I agree with this statement?'

If you *Agree Strongly*, circle **AS**
If you *Agree*, circle **A**
If you are *Not Certain*, circle **NC**
If you *Disagree*, circle **D**
If you *Disagree Strongly*, circle **DS**

1. I believe that the Bible is the Word of God.
AS A NC D DS
2. I believe the Bible is the only authority for how Christians should live their lives.
AS A NC D DS
3. I believe the Bible is one of several sources for ethical guidance.
AS A NC D DS
4. I believe parents should provide ethical guidance.
AS A NC D DS
5. I believe the church should provide ethical guidance.
AS A NC D DS
6. I believe laws of the land should develop from Biblical principles.
AS A NC D DS
7. I think ethical Biblical guidance is only relevant for Christians.
AS A NC D DS
8. I think other religions use ethical concepts from the Bible.
AS A NC D DS
9. I believe everyone is born with an inbuilt sense of right and wrong.
AS A NC D DS
10. I Believe God gives everyone the freedom to choose their ethical behaviour.
AS A NC D DS
11. A trusted friend is a good source of ethical guidance
AS A NC D DS
12. TV and Radio talk show hosts often give good advice on principles of living
AS A NC D DS
13. My pastor gives good guidance on moral living and ethical behaviour
AS A NC D DS
14. I am/will be teaching my children the same ethical principles my parents taught me AS A NC D DS
15. The songs we sing in church provide a good pattern for living
AS A NC D DS
16. Some secular songs demonstrate examples of a good lifestyle
AS A NC D DS

17. I believe its okay to do anything I feel is okay as long as it doesn't hurt anyone
AS A NC D DS
18. I believe school teachers should guide ethical decisions/behaviour of students
AS A NC D DS

Section 2

This section is concerned with your opinion about who is affected by ethics. Read the sentence carefully and think, 'Do I agree with this statement?'

If you *Agree Strongly*, circle AS

If you *Agree*, circle A

If you are *Not Certain*, circle NC

If you *Disagree*, circle D

If you *Disagree Strongly*, circle DS

1. I believe the Bible should influence the laws of the Bahamas
AS A NC D DS
2. I believe the Bible should be taught in schools
AS A NC D DS
3. I think the Bible should shape the beliefs of the Christian church
AS A NC D DS
4. I believe my denomination's teaching on moral conduct comes from the Bible
AS A NC D DS
5. I think my denomination's teachings on moral conduct are out of touch with the times
AS A NC D DS
6. I think my denomination should adhere more closely to Biblical principles
AS A NC D DS
7. Have you ever heard your church leaders teach or preach about ethics and moral conduct?
AS A NC D DS
8. As far as you are aware, does your denomination have any policies or rules to regulate or guide the conduct of its leaders?
AS A NC D DS
9. As far as you are aware, does your denomination have any policies or rules to regulate or guide the conduct of its members?
AS A NC D DS
10. I think my church should implement disciplinary measures for ethical failures? AS A NC D DS
11. I think individuals in the church should be disciplined for ethical misconduct? AS A NC D DS
12. I think the majority of the members of my church support its teachings on morality?
AS A NC D DS
13. I think the majority of the younger members of my church practice its moral teachings?
AS A NC D DS
14. I believe most of the older members practice the moral teachings of the church. AS A NC D DS
15. I believe schools should not be influenced by Christian principles.
AS A NC D DS

16. I believe students should be taught right and wrong by their teachers.

AS A NC D DS

17. Parents should be held accountable to the law if their children break the law.

AS A NC D DS

Section 3

This section is concerned with your opinion about gambling. Read the sentence carefully and think, 'Do I agree with this statement?'

If you *Agree Strongly*, circle AS

If you *Agree*, circle A

If you are *Not Certain*, circle NC

If you *Disagree*, circle D

If you *Disagree Strongly*, circle DS

1. I believe gambling is a sin.
AS A NC D DS
2. I believe gambling is okay as an amusement.
AS A NC D DS
3. I believe the Bahamas can benefit from gambling.
AS A NC D DS
4. I believe the government should tax web-shops
AS A NC D DS
5. I believe gambling encourages a poor work ethic
AS A NC D DS
6. I believe gambling is a social problem.
AS A NC D DS
7. I believe gambling should not concern the church.
AS A NC D DS
8. I would accept donations into my church from gambling enterprises.
AS A NC D DS
9. I would accept a scholarship from a web-shop.
AS A NC D DS
10. I would buy a lottery ticket.
AS A NC D DS
11. I believe casino gambling is good for tourism.
AS A NC D DS
12. I would accept a medical loan from a web-shop owner.
AS A NC D DS
13. Web-shop gambling should be legalized in the Bahamas.
AS A NC D DS
14. I believe the Bible teaches against gambling.
AS A NC D DS
15. I believe gambling can be addictive like smoking.
AS A NC D DS
16. I believe a gambling parent can negatively impact the family unit.
AS A NC D DS
17. I believe gambling enterprises should be closed down if they are illegal.
AS A NC D DS

18. Casinos and other gambling businesses should be shut down because of their negative impact on Bahamian society.
AS A NC D DS
19. In the 2013 referendum on gambling, I voted against regularizing web-shops
AS A NC D DS
20. I used the Bible to determine my moral position on gambling.
AS A NC D DS
21. The need for government to find additional revenue influenced my support for regularizing web-shops.
AS A NC D DS
22. The opportunity for more jobs weighed in on my decision to support gambling. AS A NC D DS
23. Since some Christian leaders have no problem with gambling, I see no problem with buying numbers.
AS A NC D DS

Section 4

This section is concerned with your opinion about same-sex marriage. Read the sentence carefully and think, 'Do I agree with this statement?'

If you *Agree Strongly*, circle AS

If you *Agree*, circle A

If you are *Not Certain*, circle NC

If you *Disagree*, circle D

If you *Disagree Strongly*, circle DS

1. I believe same-sex marriage is wrong.
AS A NC D DS
2. I believe same-sex marriage does not affect one's faith in God.
AS A NC D DS
3. I believe same-sex marriage is strictly a civil concern.
AS A NC D DS
4. I believe God frowns upon homosexuality.
AS A NC D DS
5. I believe divorce is a sin.
AS A NC D DS
6. I believe remarriage after a divorce is a sin.
AS A NC D DS
7. I believe same-sex marriage goes against the laws of nature
AS A NC D DS
8. I believe homosexuals choose to be homosexuals.
AS A NC D DS
9. I don't believe homosexuals have a choice in their sexual orientation.
AS A NC D DS
10. I believe marriage is intended to be a lifelong exclusive relationship.
AS A NC D DS
11. I believe marriage in the Bible is always between one man and one woman.
AS A NC D DS
12. I believe marriage is a Divine Institution.
AS A NC D DS
13. I believe same-sex couple can successfully rear children.
AS A NC D DS
14. I believe same-sex couples should be permitted to adopt children.
AS A NC D DS
15. I believe the Bible does not condemn same-sex marriage.
AS A NC D DS
16. I believe marriage is simply a man-made legal contract.
AS A NC D DS
17. I believe the Bible does not condemn remarriage of divorced persons.
AS A NC D DS

18. I believe same-sex couples should have the same social/legal benefits as heterosexual couples.

AS A NC D DS

19. I would not support a law allowing same-sex marriage in the Bahamas

AS A NC D DS

Section 5

This section is concerned with your opinion about the environment. Read the sentence carefully and think, 'Do I agree with this statement?'

If you *Agree Strongly*, circle AS

If you *Agree*, circle A

If you are *Not Certain*, circle NC

If you *Disagree*, circle D

If you *Disagree Strongly*, circle DS

1. I believe the environment is affected by the actions I take

AS A NC D DS

2. I believe the environment is important for human survival

AS A NC D DS

3. I believe man-made development can negatively impact the environment

AS A NC D DS

4. I believe man-made development can be done in a way that is not harmful to the environment

AS A NC D DS

5. I believe how we treat the environment depends on our upbringing

AS A NC D DS

6. I believe littering is a moral issue

AS A NC D DS

7. I believe the government is responsible to keep the environment healthy

AS A NC D DS

8. I believe the church should not engage the debate about protecting certain lands from developers

AS A NC D DS

9. I believe development and job creation is a priority over preserving natural habitats

AS A NC D DS

10. I believe developers should be allowed to dredge harbours to accommodate touristic vessels

AS A NC D DS

11. When staying in a hotel I prefer to have sheets and towels changed daily

AS A NC D DS

12. I think the creation of crawfish fishing season is a means to keep the prices high

AS A NC D DS

13. I believe being a Christian includes concern for the environment

AS A NC D DS

14. When staying at a hotel I have taken the 'green' option to re-use my towels and sheets

AS A NC D DS

15. When shopping I use re-usable bags instead of disposable paper or plastic bags

AS A NC D DS

16. I believe the Bible outlines our duty to care for the environment.

AS A NC D DS

17. I believe marine life returns to normal after dredging a harbour

AS A NC D DS

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